

**Identifying Criteria for the Successful Implementation of Community-Based Conservation Initiatives: Evidence from Two Case Studies in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.**

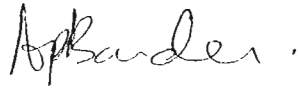
**By**

**Andrew Patrick Dominic Bowden**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Social Science in the School of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

## Declaration

This dissertation represents original work by the author and has not been previously submitted in any form to any University. Where use has been made of work of others, this has been duly acknowledged and referenced in the text.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Bowden'.

Andrew Bowden

Lusaka, Zambia, 16/09/04

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my parents, Gus and Eileen Bowden, for all their help over this last year in terms of the financial support they have given me. Their further generosity in lending me a car for the year meant that I was able to travel into the beautiful and remote regions of northern KwaZulu-Natal to carry out the research for this thesis. This research focuses on the implementation of community-based conservation. My interest in conservation of resources is attributable to the amazing wildlife opportunities I have shared and experienced with my parents over the years in Zambia and other parts of Southern Africa. I sincerely hope that these same opportunities will be available to future generations to come.

Richard Devey, my research supervisor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, deserves special praise for his expert advice, patience and exceptional skills in finding unique “Bowdenisms” in the earlier versions of this thesis.

I am indebted to Dr Andrew Venter, the CEO of the Wildlands Trust, for all the invaluable time that he gave up in assisting me with my research. He provided me with an initial focus for this study, as well as access to the case study sites and important contacts with experts in the field of Community-Based Conservation. I am still reeling from all the information that was provided to me whilst on a recent “Venter Safari” to the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area and Mabaso Community Game Reserve. I hope that one day I will be able to pass on to someone else the immense amount of help and generosity that Andrew Venter showed to me during my research stage.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all those individuals that gave up their time to be interviewed. Without their help and the vital information that they provided, this study would not have been possible.

## **Abstract**

For over a century, wildlife in Southern Africa has come under the exclusive management of states, which tends to centre on the exclusion of local communities from wildlife areas. In many cases, this approach has led to the hostility of wildlife management policies by excluded communities. This widespread dissatisfaction has caused a paradigm shift in conservation thinking towards a more community-based conservation (CBC) approach. A major assumption of this new approach is that providing socio-economic benefits on a sustainable basis to formerly excluded communities will result in conservation. Indeed, some advocates of this management regime have stressed community incorporation and inclusion as the only path to conservation. As a result, numerous CBC initiatives have been implemented throughout the African sub-region over the past ten years with varied success.

As there is no alternative to the CBC concept that attempts to enhance all three elements, namely the economic, social and biological components, of the sustainable development premise in conservation areas, it is imperative to ensure that CBC initiatives are monitored and evaluated in order to determine what the recurring problems and challenges are in implementing and running such initiatives so as to achieve the three sustainable development goals. By establishing what these recurring challenges are during the implementation process, a broad framework of necessary principles, criteria, pre-requisites and co-requisites can be established to guide future CBC initiatives.

The purpose of this study is to identify the successes, challenges and problems that have either enhanced or detracted from the socio-economic and biological elements of CBC initiatives during the implementation processes of different projects. Previous documented project examples from around the sub-region, as well as two case study examples of CBC initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal, namely the Mabaso Community Game Reserve and the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area, are used in this thesis to best determine how to enhance the social and economic elements of the sustainable

development premise in order to achieve, in theory, the biological components necessary for a successful conservation strategy.

The findings within this study, from the case study examples and secondary research, show that there are several recurring challenges and problems shared by initiators of CBC initiatives throughout the sub-continent. Issues include long project implementation periods due to government bureaucracy, planning procedures and the necessity to gain community support; debates over devolution of authority to local municipalities or tribal authorities; the risks of elite capture and/or the free rider concept whereby individuals do not change their hunting practices despite communal benefits accruing from wildlife conservation; community participation and benefit distribution; as well as the need to have clear communication channels between the community and the project implementers.

The main conclusions drawn from this study emphasise several needs necessary for making CBC initiatives sustainable for the long term. Firstly, CBC initiatives need to conserve as well as create a variety of different ways for communities to earn a living and to minimise any disruption by CBC projects of pre-existing livelihood strategies carried out by local residents. Secondly, there needs to be a provision of outside assistance to facilitate local projects and to ensure the development of the necessary skills for local communities to eventually take on the initiatives themselves. Thirdly, clearly defined property rights, as well as conflict resolution mechanisms and the enforcement of any rules and regulations are further crucial criteria. Fourthly, it is important for communities to avoid exploitation and to maximise any benefits accruing from private investors utilising local community resources by developing favourable legal contracts. Fifthly, it was found that the inclusion of tribal structures in both the case study examples increased the trust and feeling of ownership by the respective communities. Finally, it was found that CBC projects require specific locations and the right criteria to be in place for their successful implementation. Not all communities or communal areas meet these criteria, which is why CBC should be seen more as an important and necessary supplement to conservation strategies as opposed to a holistic conservation policy tool.

## **List of Abbreviations**

ADMAGE (Zambia):	Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas
ANC (South Africa)	African National Congress
CBC:	Community Based Conservation
CBNRM:	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CAMPFIRE (Zimbabwe):	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CLRB (South Africa):	Communal Land Rights Bill.
DEAT (South Africa):	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DFID (UK):	Department for International Development.
DNPWLM (Zimbabwe):	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management
EIA:	Environmental Impact Assessment
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
IFP (South Africa)	Inkatha Freedom Party.
IRDNC (Namibia)	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
ITA (South Africa):	Ingonyama Trust Act
IUCN:	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (World Conservation Union).
KZN (South Africa):	KwaZulu-Natal
LMNP (Uganda)	Lake Mburo National Park
LIRD (Zambia)	Luangwa Integrated Development Project
MCGR (South Africa):	Mabaso Community Game Reserve
MTA (South Africa):	Mathenjwa Tribal Authority
NBT:	Nature-Based Tourism
NGO:	Non- Governmental Organisation.
RDC:	Rural District Council
TFCA	Trans-Frontier Conservation Area
UGCCA (South Africa):	Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area
UWA	Ugandan Wildlife Authority

## Table of Contents

Title .....	I
Declaration .....	II
Acknowledgements .....	III
Abstract .....	IV
List of Abbreviations .....	VI
Table of Contents .....	VII
List of Figures .....	IX
List of Tables .....	IX
Appendix A: Maps .....	IX
Appendix B: Plates .....	IX

### Chapter One. Introduction

1.1. Conceptual Overview: Conservation and Development .....	1
1.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Community Conservation .....	6
1.3. Aims and Objectives of Study .....	8
1.4. Outline of Dissertation .....	11

### Chapter Two. Conceptual Overview

2.1. Development Theory and Community Conservation .....	12
2.2. Community Conservation and Sustainable Development .....	13
2.3. Sustainable Development: The Sustainable Livelihood Approach .....	15
2.4. Sustainable Development: The Economic Element .....	17
2.5. Sustainable Development: The Socio-Cultural Element .....	22

### Chapter Three. Towards Successful CBC Projects: Criteria and Case Studies

3.1. DEAT's Principles and Criteria for Successful CBNRM projects .....	27
3.2. Ostrom's Criteria for Successful CBNRM Projects .....	29
3.3.1. Nature-based Tourism: Issues of Sustainable Development .....	30
3.3.2. Benefit Distribution: The Free-Rider Concept .....	33
3.3.3. Devolution: Local Municipality vrs Tribal Authority .....	35
3.3.4. Community Participation and Elite Capture .....	37
3.3.5. The Private Sector and Community-Based Conservation .....	38
3.3.6. Long-term Sustainability of CBC Initiatives .....	41
3.3.7. Competing Social Development Choices in Conservation Areas .....	44
3.4. Research Questions .....	45

### Chapter Four. Methodology and Case Study Over-View

4.1. Case Studies: Advantages and Disadvantages .....	47
4.2. The Process of Identifying Case Studies for the Research Project .....	48
4.3.1. Data Collection .....	50
4.3.2. Documents .....	50
4.3.3. Observation .....	51

4.3.4. Interviews .....	51
4.4. Analysis .....	52
4.5. Overview of the Case Study Region .....	53

## Chapter Five. Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR): Project Analysis

5.1. Introduction .....	56
5.2. MCGR: Historical Overview .....	56
5.3. MCGR: Institutional Structures .....	59
5.4. MCGR Community Awareness and Consensus Building Phase .....	61
5.5. Government Support and Approval Phase .....	61
5.6. Partner Identification Phase and Project Construction and Operations Phase .....	64
5.7.1. Barriers to Implementation and Sustainability .....	66
5.7.2. Political Tension as a Barrier to Implementation .....	66
5.7.3. Communal vrs Individual Tenure as a Barrier to Implementation .....	69
5.7.4. Democracy and Gender Inequality as Barriers to Implementation .....	70
5.7.5. Communication as a Barrier to Implementation .....	71
5.7.6. Government Bureaucracy as a Barrier to Implementation .....	73
5.7.7. Donor Dependence as a Barrier to Implementation .....	74
5.8.1. MCGR: Towards Economic Sustainability .....	76
5.8.2. MCGR: Towards Sustainable Livelihood Strategies .....	78
5.9. Summary .....	80

## Chapter Six. Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation: Project Analysis

6.1. Introduction .....	81
6.2. UGCCA: Historical Overview .....	81
6.3. UGCCA: Institutional Structures .....	82
6.4. UGCCA: Project Implementation Successes and Challenges .....	83
6.5. UGCCA: Toward Social Sustainability .....	86
6.6.1. UGCCA: Toward Sustainable Livelihood Strategies .....	87
6.6.2. Providing Resources for Alternative Livelihood Strategies .....	87
6.6.3. Expanding Activities within the CBC Project .....	88
6.6.4. Building Skills in the Community .....	89
6.7. UGCCA: Toward Economic Sustainability .....	89
6.8. Summary .....	91

## Chapter Seven. Summary and Conclusion

7.1. Summary .....	93
7.2. Future Predictions .....	98
7.3. Further Research and Limitations of Study .....	99
7.4. Conclusion .....	101

References .....	102
------------------	-----



## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. The Three Main Concepts of Sustainable Development .....	4
Figure 2. The Livelihoods Framework .....	16
Figure 3. The Economic Benefit of Wildlife .....	17
Figure 4. The Economic Cost of Wildlife .....	18
Figure 5. Barnes' Model: Different Wildlife and Rangeland Uses .....	20
Figure 6. Project Process Map for the MCGR .....	58
Figure 7. MCGR Institutional Structure .....	59

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. The Seven Key Principles Necessary for a Successful CBNRM Programme	27
Table 2. Ostrom's Design principles for sustaining common property institutions .....	30

## **Appendix A: Maps**

Figure 8. Appendix A. Site Map of Maputoland .....	108
Figure 9. Appendix A. Map of Study Area .....	109
Figure 10. Appendix A. Map of MCGA .....	110

## **Appendix B: List of Plates**

Plate 1. The Mabaso Tribal Court House .....	111
Plate 2. Ilala Leaf ( <i>Hyphaene Coriacea</i> ) Products .....	111
Plate 3. The Mabaso Game Reserve Warehouse .....	112

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1. Conceptual Overview: Conservation and Development**

*“It is both futile and an insult to the poor to tell them that they must remain in poverty to protect the environment”* (World Commission on the Environment and Development, 1987, in Hulme and Murphree, 2001: 1).

*“Nature, like taste, is subjective. In the broadest sense, nature means the realm of animals and plants. But does it mean, as many Western cultures would have it, the absence of human activity?”* (Western, 1989: 158, in Goldman, 2003: 845).

It is argued that community involvement through the ownership, management and distribution of economic benefits amongst local communities living in and around conservation areas is what is needed not only to conserve the environment more effectively, but also to actively enhance rural community livelihood strategies through the provision of alternative sources of income, usually through pro-poor tourism initiatives connected with national parks and game reserves. The Department for International Development (DFID) defines pro-poor tourism as ‘tourism that generates net benefits for the poor’ (Poultney and Spenceley, 2001: 2). This concept, which is often referred to as the community-based conservation (CBC) approach, is a paradigm shift in conservation thinking aimed at resolving both the need to conserve the environment and benefit local communities.

The concept of community conservation ties in with the main theme of the recent 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress held in Durban South Africa in September 2003. The theme of the conference was ‘Benefits Beyond Boundaries’ (The World Conservation Union, 2003:1). This theme highlighted the need for rural communities on the periphery of reserves to gain economic benefits from national parks, and is particularly relevant to Africa, as many African communities once occupied the lands that have been gazetted for conservation purposes on the continent. These communities have historically not always benefited from the revenues that such reserves have subsequently generated through tourism and other activities. Poverty rates in such communities tend to be high, and when resources are exhausted in communal areas the community cannot usually utilise natural resources located within adjoining protected areas. This causes

resentment of communities against the existence of protected areas (Hulme and Murphree, 1999). This combination of poverty and resentment towards national parks has detrimental effects on conservation efforts, as people will not care for conservation principles if they stand in the way of enhancing economic gains. Thus incidences of trespassing, poaching and over grazing in and around protected areas, defined as illegal acts, will continue unless communities start to benefit from national parks. Such activities reflect the lack of recognition afforded to gazetted areas by communities used to informal community rights. There are numerous examples of conservation areas around the sub-region of Africa that have, and still are, experiencing high levels of resentment by local communities. For example, the Lake Mburo National Park (LMNP) in Uganda, has had a history of conflict between previously removed residents forced off the reserve's land and the Ugandan Wildlife Authority (UWA), exemplified by the observation that in the early 1990's at meetings between park staff and community members both sides regularly turned up with firearms (Hulme and Infield, 2001: 110). The CBC concept argues that economic benefits from reserves like LMNP, such as job creation through tourism ventures involved with wildlife-viewing and safari hunting operations, as well as revenue sharing schemes from national park profits, may be the incentive needed for local communities to adopt conservation practices and eliminate their apparent need to participate in illegal activities.

There are many definitions of conservation. All of these imply 'maintaining, enhancing or using sustainably the biological component of an ecosystem or biodiversity' (Kangwana, 2001: 257). Biodiversity is defined as the 'composition of natural variation found in genes, species, communities and ecosystems' (Wilson, 1989: 261). The high economic value of biodiversity, and the need to maintain it for the benefit of present and future generations, provides a major justification for conservation (Emerton, 2001: 209). The new CBC concept goes one step further than this by suggesting that if conservation areas are capable of generating economic benefits, over and above potential costs for local communities, and communities subsequently adhere to conservation principles, then conservation can be utilised as a potential policy tool towards sustainable rural development. The South African government has consequently adopted such a policy outlook, by declaring a target of placing eight percent of the country's land under 'peoples conservation,' as part of a

drive to expand benefits of protected areas into economic development and job creation to communities beyond national park boundaries (Macleod, 2003: 4).

The term ‘peoples conservation’ ties in with the paradigm shift that has occurred in conservation over the last twenty years and that has culminated in the development of the community conservation concept. Conservation efforts are slowly moving away from the old “fortress” style ways of managing conservation areas in Africa (Adams and Hulmes, 2001: 10). Fortress conservation is characterised by the state centric ‘fences and fines’ initiative that involves the exclusion of people as residents within protected areas and their prevention, usually by state run Wildlife Departments such as the UWA, of consumptive use of resources in reserves (Adams and Hulme, 2001: 10). Community conservation is defined as ‘those principles and practices that argue that conservation goals should be pursued by strategies that emphasize the role of local residents in decision making about natural resources’ (Adams and Hulme, 2001: 13). The emphasis in many community conservation initiatives is on devolving some measure of tenurial rights over natural resources and developing the capacity of community level institutions to have legally recognised, democratic and technically functioning systems to manage and to distribute benefits from natural resources (Anstey and De Sousa, 2001: 195).

This community conservation approach is based on the sustainable development premise that if local people participate in wildlife management and economically benefit from this participation, then in theory a ‘win-win’ situation will arise, whereby wildlife and biodiversity is conserved at the same time as community welfare improves (Emerton, 2001: 208). Lewellen (1995: 207) points out that sustainable development, however, is a complex concept that implies the integration of three systems: the biological, the economic and the social (Figure 1):

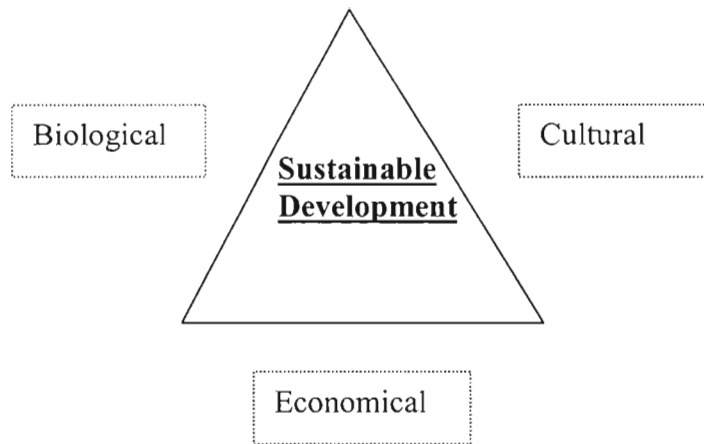


Figure 1: The Three Main Concepts of Sustainable Development (after Lewellen, 1995: 207).

Lewellen (1995, 207) further states that:

The biological goals include genetic diversity, productivity and the resilience to thrive under changing conditions. The economic system strives toward increased production of goods and services, the satisfaction of basic needs, the reduction of poverty, and increased equity. Social system goals might include cultural diversity, social diversity, social justice, popular participation in politics, and increased gender equality.

Community conservation, in order to gain support from all the stakeholders involved, such as the local community, donor funding non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as local and national government, needs to incorporate and enhance all three sustainable development elements in order to achieve success as a grassroots approach to development. The concept of sustainable development within community conservation is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

The CBC approach has a broad spectrum of implementation methods, highlighted by Barrow and Murphree (2001), which aim to accrue benefits toward local communities surrounding conservation areas. At one end of the spectrum are outreach programs that seek to establish the biological integrity of national parks and reserves by working to educate and benefit local communities and enhance the role of protected areas in local plans. In the middle of the spectrum lie collaborative management techniques that seek to create joint agreements between local communities or groups of resource users and conservation authorities for negotiated access to natural resources, such as joint ventures with private tour operators in tourism projects within

reserves. At the opposite end of the spectrum, are community-based conservation projects that aim to devolve sustainable management decisions over resources to local communities (Barrow and Murphree, 2001: 31). The latter will form the main focus of this research.

Community conservation introduces the possibility of diversifying or substituting land uses, such as subsistence agriculture or cattle rearing in communal land areas, and can be regarded as a community empowerment tool through revenues generated by sustainable eco-tourism ventures. Eco-tourism is defined as ‘ecologically sustainable tourism that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation’ that ‘places great stress on development, participation, commitment and control from local people’ (Green and Sibisi, 2001: 50). Revenues from such projects can then theoretically be ploughed back into communities for developmental purposes. Such an alternative land use is often seen as the only viable option for enhancing certain communities, especially in remote rural areas that are far beyond the reach, cares and concerns of local district councils.

Several rural communities in South Africa, such as the Mabaso Tribal Authority and Mathenjwa Tribal Authority (MTA) in South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal province, which make up the case study examples for this thesis, have bought into the concept of the CBC approach in the hope of gaining potential economic benefits through eco-tourism ventures, and are subsequently converting communal land into wildlife conservation areas with the help of various government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The role of Tribal Authorities and their structures are outlined in more detail in Chapter Five. The challenge for all the stakeholders involved is to ensure that these attempts to use conservation as an empowerment tool satisfy the dualistic aims of the new community conservation paradigm, that is conservation and equitable community development.

The new conservation paradigm is often implemented through individual Community Based Conservation (CBC) projects. For these projects to work several co-requisites need to be in place. Firstly, there needs to be economic incentives, ‘the assumption being that rural people will not sustainably manage wildlife and wild land uses unless they are perceived to yield greater returns than other forms of land uses such as crop

growing and cattle rearing' (Barrow and Murphree, 2001: 34). Secondly, the devolution of authority and responsibility to communities needs to occur in order to create an incentive framework favouring sustainable resource utilisation. Thirdly, the managerial responsibilities of these entitlements should allow communities to effectively control resource use, and distribute benefits to their membership, as well as efficiently exploit opportunities in the natural resource market (Barrow and Murphree, 2001:34).

A further co-requisite is the need to create an enabling legal and policy context for local people to manage their resources sustainably, as well as to encourage the development of wildlife stocks, safari-hunting and tourism in communal or tribal lands in order to establish alternative revenue creating opportunities for communities in such areas (Barrow and Murphree, 2001: 34). Institutions, namely rules and regulations, for the effective local management of natural resources must be established by the local communities themselves, and benefits must accrue to the community on a sustainable and equitable basis if projects are to be successfully implemented (Barrow and Murphree, 2001: 34).

## **1.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Community Conservation**

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has identified six major arguments in favour of the new conservation approach through CBC projects. Firstly, the new approach is necessary due to the lack of efficacy and economic unsustainability of the fortress conservation methods, brought about by high incidences of poaching and local resentment towards reserves, inherited from the colonial era. Secondly, it is important to enhance and conserve natural resources in communal areas where large proportions of the population live. Thirdly, it is vital to provide economic incentives for local people to use resources in a sustainable manner. Fourthly, the potential viability of common property management regimes, which are described in more detail later on in this chapter, need to be enhanced. Fifthly, there is growing evidence of greater efficacy of bottom-up approaches to rural development. Finally, the new conservation approach, with its emphasis on community involvement, provides redress for the injustice of the forced

removals through which protected areas were first created, especially in Southern Africa (The World Conservation Union, 2003: 2).

According to the IUCN, in spite of the potential benefits of community conservation, real success stories of the new approach remain somewhat isolated (The World Conservation Union, 2003: 3). Six main criticisms of the CBC approach have been identified by the IUCN. Firstly, it has been found that community conservation has generated lower economic benefits for local people than originally anticipated. Campbell and Vainio-Mattila (2003) for example, found that in Zambia's Luangwa Integrated Development Project (LIRDP) only eleven percent of the local community members gained direct employment in safari operations. As a result of lower expected economic benefits it is likely that fewer incentives for conservation have occurred. However, it can be counter-argued that something is better than nothing, and that community conservation is by far a better alternative than the previous fortress conservation techniques that employed fewer community members. Secondly, largely as a consequence of poor incentives, there is a lack of evidence of positive impacts on conservation. Thirdly, many community projects have naïve assumptions about the coherence of rural communities, often assuming that communities are homogenous in terms of the benefits they derive from their surrounding environments. Fourthly, community-based conservation schemes often underestimate the difficulties of joint decision-making problems in developing strong and effective local institutions. Political commitment to the devolution of decision-making powers is often hard to gain. Additionally, the capture of benefits by bureaucrats in intermediate institutions has also been found to be a big problem. Finally, arguments exist that conservation and rural development are essentially incompatible, in that development often leads to detrimental practices in terms of conservation (The World Conservation Union, 2003: 3). Development is often measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in other words the amount of output of goods and services a country produces. Increases in GDP often require increases in resource use, such as raw materials that are often finite in nature. Subsequently, improvements in development are often associated with deterioration of natural resources, for example the loss of biodiversity often occurs due to expansions in agriculture. Community conservation attempts to counter this criticism by incorporating notions of sustainable development into its ideology and



finding ways of enhancing conservation efforts without detracting from rural livelihood strategies.

There is also an argument that the new CBC concept in terms of conservation has an over-emphasised focus at the local level. The CBC approach assumes that the destiny of parks and conservation within communal areas lies in the hands of local people. According to Wilshusen et al (2002: 29) CBC initiatives do not take into account the fact that local people are only a minor part of a much broader picture, whereby remote communities are strongly influenced by decisions of the central government and conditions determined by it, such as the construction of roads; availability of rural credit; subsidies, and tax incentives; raising or lowering trade barriers and laws governing labour practices. Against such powerful macro-economic forces, it is argued that any attempts by CBC initiatives to encourage conservation would simply pale into insignificance. This may be the case, but as the following aims and objectives of this study point out if the CBC concept does not sufficiently address biodiversity protection it would be a mistake either to assume that we have nothing to learn from the approach or that it should be tossed out as a policy tool.

### **1.3. Aims and Objectives of Study**

Community conservation initiatives in communal lands are being promoted as an important tool for empowering local communities in rural areas around South Africa. Whether it is an effective and efficient tool for both development and conservation goals is a highly debated and contentious issue. Questions of whether CBC is more equitable, more efficient, more conservatory and more developmental than alternatives need to be answered (Hulme and Murphree, 2001: 281). However, it can be counter-argued that a return to older authoritarian protectionist strategies to achieve conservation would suggest that nothing has been learnt from past failures and would be tantamount to reinventing the “square wheel” (Wilshusen et al. 2002: 19). The debate needs to move on from whether the new community-conservation premise is an economically, socially and biologically viable solution, to finding ways that will ensure that the idealism of the community conservation approach becomes a sustainable working reality. It is for this reason that this study focuses on identifying

and determining necessary criteria essential for ensuring the successful implementation of CBC initiatives.

Foggin and Munster (2000:7) emphasise that in many rural areas, where there is extensive poverty, and few prospects for substantial economic development, nature conservation in conjunction with tourism development does not represent an opportunity cost, but a means of contributing to the alleviation of rural poverty. The opportunity cost of conservation can be defined as the opportunity forgone to use the land and resources for other purposes. The argument therefore is not whether community conservation works, but how best to ensure that the new concept works sustainably, efficiently and equitably to simultaneously alleviate poverty and enhance conservation.

Adams and Hulme (2001) point out that the achievement of the counter-narrative to fortress conservation is not that it has proved that community conservation works; rather it is that it has created the space for a set of community conservation experiments that take many forms and are achieving very different results. Community conservation projects, therefore, require intensive monitoring and study so that the knowledge created from them can be fed back into policy that can be acted on to make future projects more effective (Adams and Hulme, 2001: 24). It is important that agencies and individuals engaged in policy and implementation of community conservation approaches respond to the many valid criticisms which have been levelled at CBC projects, by analysing and understanding the many problems and challenges which exists, and then develop appropriate approaches, policies and programmes able to meet these challenges (The World Conservation Union, 2003:3). The experiences of community conservation initiatives in Southern Africa so far, mainly through the process of trial and error, have led to the identification of a growing number of broad criteria deemed necessary to ensuring the sustainable success of community conservation initiatives.

*As such, the first main aim of this thesis is to introduce and describe the cases under study, namely the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (UGCCA) and the Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR) in KwaZulu-Natal, in order to further document examples of CBC initiatives and determine what the key role players*

*involved in the case studies perceive to be the most relevant issues necessary for the successful implementation of CBC initiatives. The second main objective is to identify a thorough set of criteria deemed necessary, during the implementation phase of a CBC initiative, for the success and long-term sustainability of community based conservation projects. These criteria are highlighted in Chapter Three. The third aim of this thesis is to determine whether these identified criteria for successful implementation of CBC projects are included and practiced by the two case study examples, because if these criteria are not included, then theoretically the two CBC ventures in KZN are more likely to fail.*

The comparative appraisal of the two emerging CBC projects in KwaZulu-Natal was carried out in order to gain a first hand understanding of the problems, challenges, successes, as well as other experiences encountered by the two projects through interviews with leading players of the various different stakeholders involved with the two projects. These experts in the CBC arena were then asked what they would recommend is necessary to ensure the sustainable success of future projects. *The findings aim to enhance the growing broad framework of pre-requisites and co-requisites deemed necessary to the sustainability and success of community conservation projects in the future.*

It is important to note that each case study example of a community conservation project is unique, with its own set of inimitable problems. Where the two case study projects do not meet all of the identified criteria for the sustainability of CBC projects, *a fourth aim will be to determine what the effects are of including or excluding criteria on the various sustainable development elements of the projects, namely the social, economic and biological components.*

As the concept of community conservation is a relatively new phenomenon in terms of the implementation process and running of projects, especially in South Africa, it can be argued that there is no right or wrong way of proceeding. Each new project brings with it a new learning curve. The more that community conservation projects are implemented, analysed and documented, then the easier it will be to identify related recurring themes on which to try and create a working framework to help

guide the sustainable implementation and running of future community conservation projects.

#### **1.4. Outline of Dissertation**

This dissertation begins with an outline of the new community-based conservation approach. Chapter Two introduces a conceptual overview of the theory involved with the new CBC ideology. Chapter Three highlights a list of principles and criteria, identified from the literature, that are deemed necessary for the successful implementation of future community conservation projects and contains case study examples of community conservation projects through-out southern Africa. Chapter Three also outlines the main objectives and research questions for this study. Chapter Four is an outline of the methodology used to gather data for this research. This chapter also introduces background information on the case study areas, namely the Mabaso and Usuthu Gorge Community Game Reserves. Chapter Five is an analysis of the Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR) case study area and outlines some of the successes and challenges faced during the implementation of this project. Chapter Six provides a comparative analysis of the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area, which highlights subtle differences between its own implementation process and that of the MCGR. Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter summing up all the major themes and findings.

It is expected that this research will contribute to the current understanding of the new conservation approach and its workings through CBC projects in communal lands. The research aims to determine the problems faced and opportunities taken when implementing and maintaining the two case study projects in KwaZulu-Natal and comparing these experiences with those from other documented case study examples from other parts of Southern Africa. A further objective of the thesis will be to determine whether the case study examples have incorporated, into their project plans, the highlighted set criteria and principles, identified in Chapters Two and Three, and how the main stakeholders involved in the project plans have worked together to overcome potential problems.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Conceptual Overview**

#### **2.1. Development Theory and Community Conservation**

The paradigm shift from fortress conservation to a more integrated community based model reflects the changes that have occurred in overall development theory in the past fifty years. In the 1950s and 1960s Modernisation theory, with its strong emphasis on state intervention, planned industrialisation and reliance on economic growth as a tool to transform society from predominantly traditional values to modern notions of industrialisation, dominated development ideology. This gradually changed with a realisation in a lot of cases of state limitations and ineffectiveness, as well as the persistence of unequal distribution of benefits in attempts to eradicate poverty through economic growth.

In the 1970s the development focus expanded to include a 'basic needs' approach that aimed to attend directly to the needs of the poor (Preston, 1996: 245). Development thinkers introduced ideas of sustainable livelihoods and acknowledged the integrated nature of poverty reduction, which encompasses resource accessibility and management, control over assets, markets, household incomes, health, education, gender sensitivity, social inclusion and environmental preservation at the grass roots level (Mullen, 1999: IX). This new development ideology conflicted with previous philosophy on development that considered communities to be a hindrance to progressive social change. Instead the new approach championed the role of communities in bringing about decentralization and meaningful participation in efforts to reduce poverty through a 'bottom up' approach to development (Gibson and Agrawal, 1999: 629).

These newer ideas, emphasising the important role that communities could play in development, were incorporated into conservation ideology through statements of intent on global environmental problems issued following the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro. These statements strongly advocated, as solutions to development and the sustainable utilisation of the environment, a combination of government decentralization, devolution to local communities of responsibility for natural resources held as commons, and community participation (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 225). This movement

further adopted, to some extent, the neo-liberal principles of the present day, by emphasising the importance of markets and communal property rights as a mechanism for communities to gain economic empowerment through conservation. This notion of 'market environmentalism' incorporates the idea that the market is the most important mechanism for mediating between people, and regulating their interaction with the environment (Adams, 2001: 104). Market environmentalists would argue that when market prices rise as resources become scarce people would become more innovative and find cheaper sources or ways of using resources more efficiently. Within such a model, attempts by the state to create rules and regulations to control resource use will be inefficient, and bound to fail if economic welfare is to be maximised and resources are to be maintained at desirable levels (Adams, 2001: 104). The necessity for free markets, in relation to communal property rights, is discussed later in this chapter.

## **2.2. Community Conservation and Sustainable Development**

New challenges to development for developing nations emerged in the last twenty years. It was previously assumed that developing countries were free to replicate the development trends of developed nations by depleting the natural resources and, in the short term, degrading the environment to generate economic growth without paying the associated external costs (Grainger, 1997: 61). However, over the last twenty years there have been growing calls to restrict this freedom in order to protect the global environment. The complex concept of sustainable development emerged as a result of these concerns. One of the original definitions presented in the Brundtland report (1987) and cited in Grainger (1997: 63) was that 'sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' This definition was not socially enhancing enough, especially for developing nations, as it was seen as perpetuating the present situation of poverty and inequality by simply using the same resources more efficiently. As a consequence, many definitions came about to incorporate social progression, such as the one put forward by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 1991 that defined sustainable development as a means to 'improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting systems' (Mawhinney, 2002: 3). The difference between the two definitions is that one suggests remaining in the same state, namely in poverty, for the benefit of future generations, whereby the second definition suggests that there is room for social progression within the sustainable

development premise and that development without jeopardising the chances of future generations is possible so long as it is planned, implemented and controlled properly. The older, 'greener' arguments, which saw sustainable development as concerned solely with environmental issues, subsequently were replaced by more holistic versions with consideration for social, economic and environmental aspects of life (Mawhinney, 2002: 3), as illustrated by the sustainable development model introduced in Figure 1 (Chapter One). This sustainable development model provides the conceptual framework for this study; CBC projects should focus on and attempt to enhance social, economic and environmental facets in order to be deemed successful.

The challenge of incorporating the sustainable development model into the planning process of a CBC project is to find ways of accommodating the social, economic and environmental priorities that different groups of people, depending on their outlook, want to see achieved. For example, economists would like to see economic growth in line with healthy population growth. Environmentalists on the other hand wish to acknowledge the constraints of nature and impose restraint on growth (Mawhinney, 2002: 11). In relation to community conservation, some stakeholders would be determined to see an increase in the biodiversity and conservation of areas, whilst other important players, such as the communities involved, will want to see improvements in community welfare. The major challenge is to balance these priorities.

Mawhinney (2002: 13) points out that the most successful strategy for sustainable development practitioners has been through the development of a set of locally derived indicators, and their subsequent application based on a set of locally defined targets. Community conservation projects according to Mawhinney (2002) would need to identify locally derived indicators to measure progress and determine a balance between the three elements of sustainable development. Three forms of indicator should be evident. Economic indicators might include measures of wealth such as GDP, employment, access to credit, livelihood diversification, opportunities and profit making abilities. Social scientists might include measures of quality of life, such as health statistics (e.g. infant mortality rates), education and access to information. Environmental measures include indicators showing better biodiversity and ecosystem conditions. The overall expectation from the sustainable development model is that indicators for all three elements will improve.

If one of the elements deteriorates at the expense of enhancing another element then purists could argue that a project has failed. Mawhinney argues that it is seldom likely that all three elements will show improvement since there are trade-offs and a perfect balance is indefinable (2002: 17). This is not to say that the sustainable development model is an over idealistic notion that never could be translated into reality. So long as none of the elements deteriorate, and some indicators improve, then a perfect balance is an irrelevant goal, and the project should therefore not be deemed a failure. A realistic goal would be to enhance and create *some* form of balance between the elements in order for the project to be deemed a success.

The three facets of the sustainable development model are irrevocably inter-related and this linkage may encourage balance. For example, the main objectives for conservationists who support CBC initiatives are to see the achievement of the biological component of the sustainable development model being sustained and improved. According to the CBC ideology, the enhancement of the biological component of the sustainable development model is closely interrelated to the other two elements, namely the economic and social goals. By rewarding communities economically and socially for their conservation efforts by taking ownership of and generating benefits from CBC initiatives, communities will have more incentives to practice conservation techniques. The enhancement of the economic and social elements of rural people in communal lands, as a result of CBC initiatives, should encourage communities to take a greater invested interest in seeing CBC initiatives succeed, which will consequently enhance the biological component of the sustainable development model. The next part of this chapter will therefore focus on the economic and social elements of the sustainable development model, which are deemed necessary for achieving the biological goals of the CBC concept.

### **2.3. Sustainable Development: The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach**

The ideas and the aims of the community conservation approach tie in with the concept of the sustainable livelihoods approach that takes a holistic view which unites concepts of economic development, reduced vulnerability and environmental sustainability while building on the strengths of the poor (Satge, 2002: 3). Vulnerability can be defined as ‘the characteristics that limit an individual, a household, a community or even an ecosystem’s



capacity to anticipate, manage, resist or recover from the impact of a natural or other threat (often called a hazard or natural trigger)’ (Satge, 2002: 2). The sustainable livelihoods approach assumes that households are sustainable if their levels of assets and capabilities are enough to avoid vulnerability. Assets are defined as the resources used for gaining a livelihood, whilst capabilities are the combined knowledge, skills, state of health and ability to labour or command over labour of a household (Satge, 2002: 6). Livelihood assets are influenced by various factors as illustrated in Figure 2:

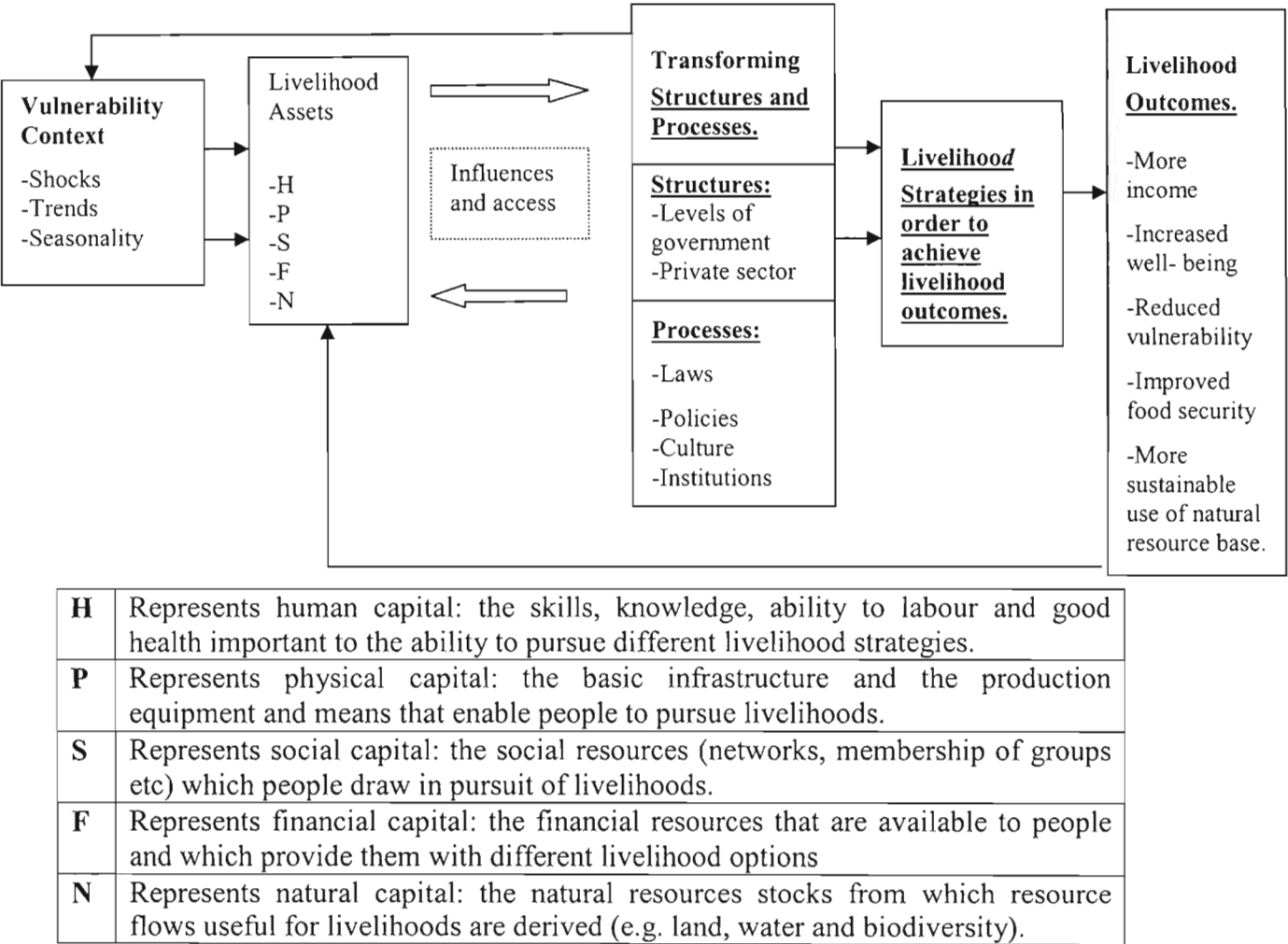


Figure 2. The livelihoods framework (after Satge, 2002: 5).

If planned and implemented properly, the community conservation approach could enhance the concept of livelihoods by improving livelihood outcomes with a beneficial, well thought through combination of structures, namely levels of government support and private sector investment, and processes, such as laws, policies and institutions implemented by the communities themselves. The way that the livelihoods framework is put into practice, through participatory planning and appreciative enquiry, can build the

capacity of local people to lobby for appropriate policy and institutional support that benefits them the most, thus enhancing the socio-cultural elements of the sustainable development premise, and which is why community involvement in decision-making through out the whole CBC project is crucial. Additionally, community conservation can contribute to sustainable livelihood diversification through additional tourism revenues that would not be available to communities had they not adopted the new community conservation approach.

#### **2.4. Sustainable Development: The Economic Element**

The chance of economic growth in a community through balancing costs and benefits of wildlife value will be used to demonstrate the economic element of CBC. The economic rationale behind benefit-based approaches to community conservation is that communities must benefit from wildlife if they are to be willing and able to conserve it. For this principle to work, however, the economic benefits of wildlife conservation must exceed the costs. Examples of wildlife benefits are illustrated in Figure 3:

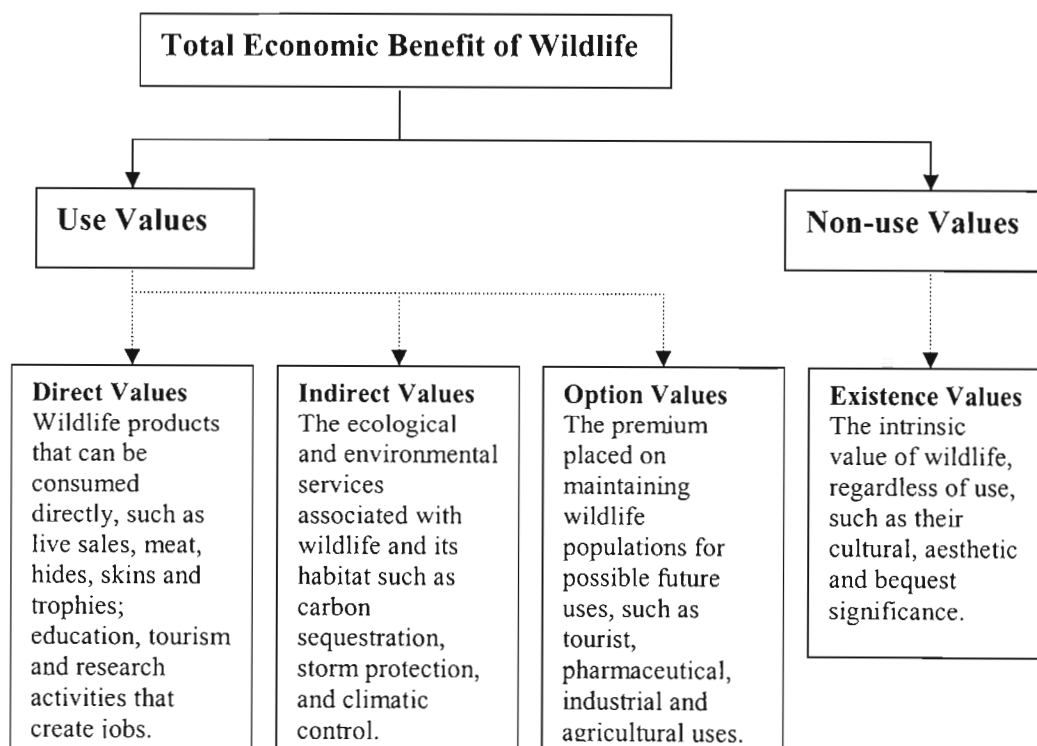


Figure 3. The Economic Benefit of Wildlife (after Emerton, 2001: 210)

From an economic perspective, direct values present the most tangible forms of remuneration from wildlife, as they are often easier to measure and offer direct physical benefits for individuals. The option value of wildlife is defined as the value perceived in society of preserving the resource for possible future use, whereas the existence value is the value in simply preserving the resource even though it may never be used (Barnes, 2002: 278). Both of these values are economic measurements reflected by peoples' willingness to pay for them. Holland and Oellermann (1993), cited in Barnes (2002: 279), found that in Southern Africa there was strong evidence of willingness to pay for wildlife preservation among visitors to wildlife areas. It is important to note that the majority of visitors to national parks are foreigners or locals in the higher income brackets of society. Their willingness to pay for the non-use values of wildlife may not be shared by poor people who live in and around conservation areas, and who need to utilise the land to sustain a living. The willingness to pay for the non-use value of an area must therefore be viewed as a luxury for the privileged few. If resources can be redirected from those willing to pay for wildlife value to those who cannot pay, then the latter may change their option value.

The potential economic benefits of wildlife can only be used as an incentive for community wildlife conservation if these are balanced against economic costs of wildlife conservation. Examples of such costs are listed in Figure 4.

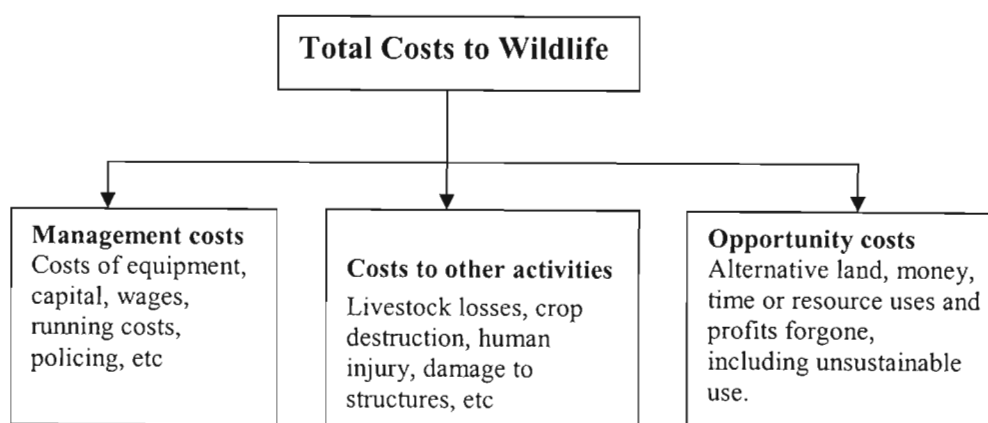


Figure 4: The Economic Cost of Wildlife (after Emerton, 2001:217).

Wildlife benefits must at least cover direct costs for conservation to be economically viable. It is not enough to merely allocate a fixed proportion of wildlife revenues to

community development activities; the level and type of benefits provided must be closely tied to the magnitude of wildlife costs accruing to communities in order for local residents to support conservation efforts (Emerton, 2001: 220). Communities should also decide for themselves where and in what form the revenues raised from conservation should be spent in order to increase their support through their involvement in the decision making process.

The opportunity cost of conservation is a very important concept for economics. It is estimated that the opportunity cost of South Africa's Kruger National Park, measured in terms of lost revenues from potential inhabitants capacity, potential livestock populations and potential cultivated areas was approximately US\$ 6million in the early 1990s (Engelbrecht and Van der Walt, 1993: 114). If local communities feel that they could gain more benefits from conservation areas through different land uses, such as agriculture or cattle rearing, then opposition towards reserves will naturally be high. Allowing different land uses within conservation areas at a manageable level can reduce opportunity costs and conflicts between communities and conservation bodies.

The economic contribution of wildlife in terms of national income, employment, and subsistence opportunities for South Africa was around US\$ 40 million in 1996 (Wells, 1996). The concern for CBC approaches, therefore, is the extent to which these revenues and benefits accrue to residents of wildlife areas in order to reduce the opportunity costs of reserves and initiate strong incentives for locals to collaborate in conservation initiatives. The way in which revenues are distributed within communities is crucial; it is essential that individuals benefit directly through shared revenues and jobs, at the same time as the overall community benefits through public services such as schools and clinics, in order to create both individual and communal incentives for conservation practices.

An important determinant is whether wildlife conservation can compete with commercial and non-commercial (traditional) livestock keeping, crop growing and other land use alternatives. According to Barnes, different land use alternatives fit within 'spatial niches,' in which they are economically efficient, and can contribute to national income, livelihoods and the national development process (2002: 286). Barnes found that commercial livestock keeping needed to be near transport networks and markets to be economically efficient, and therefore did not have the economic potential to displace

wildlife in most remote parts of the southern Africa region (2002: 285). The economic value of traditional livestock keeping was harder to determine, though it was recognised that it was a very important contributor to rural livelihoods, especially in moderately remote and less remote areas (Barnes, 2002: 285). Wildlife conservation had the highest economic returns where non-use values were high and suited to tourism ventures; that is, ‘areas with scenic and biological diversity as well as high wildlife densities’ (Barnes, 2002: 281). Figure 5 highlights the hypothetical economic efficiency of different land uses along a gradient according to their anticipated negative effects on existing biodiversity and likely economic non-use values.

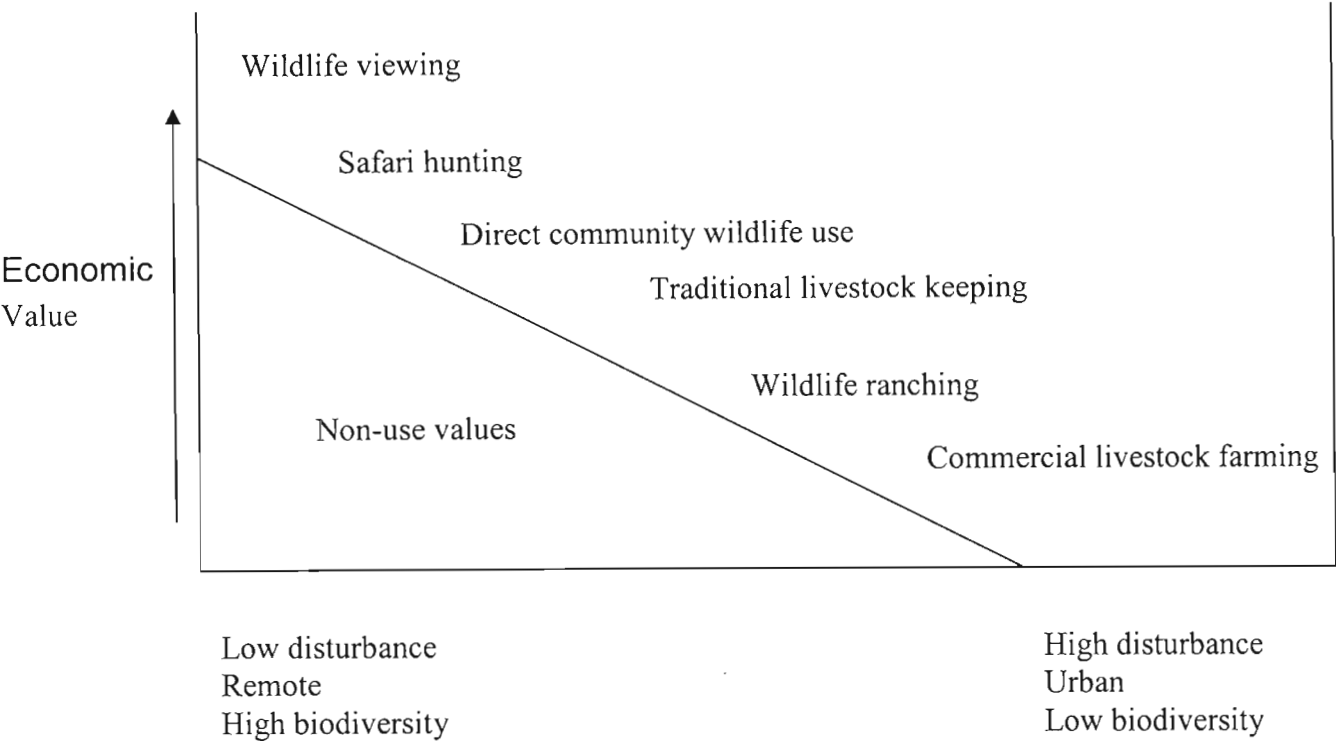


Figure 5. The hypothetical spread of different wildlife and rangeland uses along a gradient of environmental quality in Botswana, showing the relationship with likely non- use values for wildlife (after Barnes, 2002: 285).

Figure 5 illustrates that the total economic value of the spatial mix of land uses can feasibly be maximised if development takes place within a spectrum of land use zones in which economic use values are optimised, while loss of non-use values are minimised where the willingness to pay for them by tourists are high (Barnes, 2002: 286). Wildlife can then be seen as having a complimentary, rather than competitive, role to play in development in relation to other land uses so long as it occurs in appropriate regions that maximise economic returns from those areas of land with high non-use values. Viljoen



and Naicker (2000: 136) support this view by suggesting that conflict is likely to occur in areas where local natural resource use and agricultural practices are difficult to reconcile with nature-based tourism developments that require pristine natural environments for success. However, in areas susceptible to drought, where grazing and agricultural resources are poor, wildlife conservation and tourism initiatives are the most viable and sustainable forms of land use (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 136).

In terms of using conservation as an upliftment strategy for communities, it is thought that the economic goals of sustainable development can be enhanced through neo-liberal ideals of minimal state intervention and the utilisation of markets. The argument follows that free markets give individuals, and in this instance communities, the greatest freedom in choosing what to produce and consume and that patterns of natural resource use (including conservation) are best determined by market processes, which follows the dictum of 'use it or lose it' (Hulme and Murphree, 1999: 280). This can be misconstrued as supporting the consumption model – that a community can use a resource until it is depleted and will then find alternative resources – which is not the case. Nuding (1999, XI) emphasises this by arguing that conservation management can only follow often-controversial utilitarian principles, which means that the well-being of each individual animal and plant is important but only of secondary importance compared to the overall conservation of species, populations, entire ecosystems and, above all, the legitimate interests of participating people in their own development and improvement. Therefore, when following the principle of sustainability, wildlife can be utilized like every other renewable resource. For example, even though hunting within a natural ecosystem is not necessary, at the same time it is not harmful as one of the options of wildlife management. However, the main danger of utilitarian conservation management is – like any management of resources – that the principles of sustainability might be pushed too far (Nuding, 1999: XII).

Hulme and Murphree (1999) emphasise that wildlife areas must be exposed to a market where their uniqueness and scarcity will lead to high economic values being placed on them so that the likelihood of conservation is greatly enhanced. Consumers, namely tourists, trophy hunters, and people who intrinsically value a species or habitat, will bid up prices so that alternative uses that would degrade the environment, particularly agriculture, will no longer be attractive to producers (Hulme and Murphree, 1999: 282).

To create a market within a communal conservation area, means need to be found to increase the exclusivity of the conservation area in question, in order to enhance the non-use value of an area, and grant some rights to the stewards, namely the community, of that good, so that they can market the environmental service, often a tourist initiative (Shilling and Osha, 2002: 16). Any profits generated by the creation of these markets then need to be equitably distributed to the stewards and to the community at large.

Clear communal property rights, as opposed to individual property rights over a resource, need to be determined and enforced to ensure that markets work properly to benefit the community. Communal property rights can be defined as a 'regime in which a defined group collectively manages and exploits a common property resource within a defined jurisdiction' (Jones and Murphree, 2001: 44). Shilling and Osha (2002:11) emphasise three major characteristics of communal property rights that highlight their relevance to conservation and community enhancement:

Firstly, common-pool property regimes tend to be larger than one individual can afford. Secondly, there are multiple beneficiaries of the properties output. Finally, producing that output is a result of integral functions of the property as a whole.

The desired result is that management of the property as a common unit produces more efficient output than does division into more discrete, independently managed units. However, the community itself must determine inherent incentives for equitable allocation of resources (Shilling and Osha, 2002:11). Communal property rights move beyond conventional market systems to embrace common goals and benefits, and they illustrate the possibility of using market tools to achieve more sustainable results. There is a danger that individual households, whilst recognising the higher value of conservation as an alternative land use in comparison with say cattle farming, may nevertheless wish to opt for cattle since cattle are individually owned and therefore the disposal of worth is at the owner's sole discretion and not that of the community (Jones and Murphree, 2001: 49).

## **2.5. Sustainable Development: The Socio-Cultural Element**

For the community conservation approach to be successful in achieving the social and cultural elements of sustainable development, namely the empowering of communities

through increasing their ownership and decision making responsibilities over assets and their own progression, communities need to have a strong legal claim over resources. Institutions, defined here as rules and regulations, then need to be created by a fair representation of the community to best determine how to manage the communal property regime, how revenues from the communal resource base will be equitably distributed amongst the community, what form this will take and how the community plans to enforce the institutions they themselves created. All these processes are designed to instil a sense of ownership and trust within the community of CBC initiatives, which will enhance the long-term survival of such projects by ensuring communities themselves take the lead in controlling and determining the direction of the processes involved. If outsiders set the terms of local people's involvement in decisions about land and resource use then conservation goals will not be achieved because imposed community-based conservation implies an exercise in futility (Murphree, 1994: 404, in Adams, 2001: 343).

It is critical that the establishment and implementation of rules about the use, management and conservation of resources, and the resolution of the disputes that arise during the interpretation and application of these rules are devolved to a local level to gain the support of communities through ensuring that the community owns the project (Gibson and Agrawal, 1999: 638). Community ownership of CBC projects is crucial in helping restore pride and enhance the self-sufficiency of communities too often seen as being reliant on outsiders for developmental help. Additionally, notions of proprietorship and the devolution of important management decisions over resources to the community are imperative issues in ensuring that revenues go directly back into communities and are not absorbed by overly bureaucratic government, and occasionally private, systems. The devolution of management decisions is also essential in terms of restoring some of the pre-colonial rights that communities once had in relation to managing resources. Gibson and Agrawal (1999: 631) point out that communities down the millennia have developed elaborate rituals and practices to limit off take levels, restrict access to critical resources, and distribute harvests. These are often more efficient than modern day practices. The extent to which devolution of authority is achieved and to whom this authority is devolved are therefore key issues in determining the success of community conservation. The relation between community and resources is discussed in further detail in Chapter Three using examples of CBCs such as CAMPFIRE.



Many community based conservation projects are flawed in their characterisation of communities and their local environments. Community conservation approaches tend to view communities as relatively homogenous units, with members' shared characteristics – such as language, culture, shared beliefs and geographical boundaries – distinguishing them from outsiders (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 228). Serious attention to social differences within communities, such as gender, wealth, age, origins and other aspects of social identity have been neglected in the environmental policy debate (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 229). Such characteristics divide and crosscut community boundaries and should be included in project and research design and policy decisions.

Different members of communities will have differing impacts on the economic, social, and conservation arenas, and subsequently, conservation efforts will have different impacts, whether they are positive or negative, on different community members. Both formal (such as property rights set out by governments) and informal (customary property rights) institutions, legitimised by social norms and codes of behaviour, shape the ways in which differentiated actors in rural communities access, use and derive well being from environmental resources. By doing this, these institutions influence the course of ecological change (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 241).

If certain institutions can be identified as supporting the interests of certain social actors, or as contributing to desired courses of ecological change, then they can be targeted by policy in strategies of institution building or support (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 243). This would imply agencies moving away from generalized community support towards far more explicit partiality. Some people could be made worse off through a form of institutional failure that would favour some while actually increasing poverty levels for others within a community by denying them access to certain types of resources. Amartya Sen (1989) cited in Leach, Mearns and Scoones (1999: 233) refers to this as environmental entitlement failure. Environmental entitlements refer to alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services over which social actors have legitimate effective command, and which are instrumental in achieving well being such as 'food, water, or fuel; the market value of such resources, or of rights to them; and the utilities derived from environmental services, such as pollution sinks or properties of the hydrological cycle' (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 234). The fundamental issue of concern is how particular individuals and groups of people gain access to and control

environmental entitlements, and how this might change if a new reserve is set up on their communal land.

Certain institutions, both formal and informal, cause entitlement failure by not allowing various groups access to certain resources that would enhance their well-being. For example, women in rural areas, who traditionally collect resources such as fire wood and grass for thatching, may be made worse off if they have to travel further to collect such resources as a consequence of being unable to enter newly designated community conservation reserves that they may live next to. It is important therefore that community conservation projects do not side with particular groups or institutions within communities and that they incorporate three critical factors about communities as identified by Gibson and Agrawal:

Firstly, community conservation projects must identify and include all of the multiple actors with multiple interests that make up communities. Secondly, community conservation approaches must understand the process through which these actors interrelate. Finally, project managers must realise the institutional arrangements that structure their interactions and fairly include all the community players in the decision making process, including the subordinate groups (1999: 213).

The notion of environmental sustainability is problematic given the diverse, partial perspectives of different social actors. The questions are what is to be sustained and for whom? Communities need to be seen as heterogeneous groups with different, often conflicting needs, desires and wants from their surrounding environment. Project planners must subsequently take all these needs and desires into account and act accordingly to ensure that subordinate groups are heard and not made worse off at the expense of dominant groups within communities.

An obvious direct social benefit of community conservation projects is the potential for job creation, usually as scouts or in tourist ventures, such as safari hunting and photographic safari operations, or in the building of infrastructure such as game fences, roads and lodges. It is imperative that these jobs are issued in a fair and equitable manor, avoiding issues of nepotism and elite capture amongst community members involved with the implementation of CBC initiatives.

As CBC initiatives are often in areas of high unemployment and offer a limited number of jobs, the majority of which are short term positions usually involved in the building of infrastructure, it is vitally important that CBC initiatives accrue enough income relatively quickly to cover running costs of the project, to ensure its financial sustainability, as well as to go towards social infrastructure development to benefit the whole community, in order to gain their continued support for the initiative. The long term dedication of the donor funding community is essential in this process, in terms of financial commitment, in order to bridge the gap between projects being able to generate enough income in excess of costs to go towards social infrastructure, and the relative speed at which communities want to see such benefits in return for their conservation efforts. The eventual long term aim of CBC projects is to become financially sustainable by generating enough income, usually through tourism or the sustainable consumptive use of wildlife, to both cover running costs of the initiative and provide funds for social infrastructure expenditure within the community.

This chapter offers a conceptual over-view of the main theoretical issues and concerns of implementing and running CBC initiatives. It has illustrated how the paradigm shift from fortress conservation to community-based initiatives fits in with the overall move towards community participation in the broader development field. The sustainable development model in Figure 1 was subsequently re-introduced, which presents the framework and challenge to CBC project implementers of trying to enhance the economic and cultural elements in order sustain the biological interests of CBC initiatives. The next chapter looks at specific case studies of CBC initiatives from the sub-Saharan region to see how previous projects have evolved to satisfy these three sustainable development elements, what problems they encountered, as well as establishing essential principles and criteria deemed necessary for the sustainable viability of future projects.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Toward Successful CBC Projects: Criteria and Case Studies**

#### **3.1. DEAT's Principles and Criteria for Successful CBNRM projects**

At the 2003 World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) launched guidelines on Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) aimed at empowering rural communities in decision-making in the use and management of natural resources (DEAT, 2003: 1). The seven key principles put forward by DEAT are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: The Seven Key Principles Necessary for a Successful CBNRM Programme (DEAT, 2003: 21)

<b><i>Principle</i></b>
A variety of different ways of earning a living needs to be maintained, to minimise risk in case of natural and economic disasters.
The natural resource base should be maintained and even improved so that the natural resources can continue to provide livelihoods to people now and in the future.
Local organisations, including local government and community organisations, must work effectively to manage local resources for the benefit of local people and the environment.
People should receive real benefits – economic, social, cultural, and spiritual – from managing the natural resources wisely.
There needs to be effective policies and laws that are implemented, wherever possible, by local people's legitimate and representative organisations.
Outside assistance must be provided to facilitate local projects. Local people's knowledge and experience is respected.
There needs to be good understanding of local leadership and local leadership fully must support CBNRM projects.

The first principle states that people should be able to rely on various ways of earning a living in community-based projects. Most rural households use more than one method of making a living in order to survive. CBNRM projects must not be relied on as an only source of income for entire communities, and must aim to add to peoples' livelihoods as opposed to detract from them (DEAT, 2003: 23). All cultural differences in the community must be taken into consideration to minimise potential detrimental effects on certain groups within communities.

According to the second principle available resources must be used in a sustainable manner. Rules and regulations, set and enforced by the community, are necessary in order to gain community support for the sustainable use of existing resources. Resentment may be created if outsiders set these rules and regulations. It is also imperative that the community is made aware of the cash value of their surrounding resources and other benefits that conserving it on a sustainable basis might bring (DEAT, 2003: 24).

The third principle suggests that local organisations have the ability to manage local resources and facilitate decision-making on behalf of communities (DEAT, 2003: 29). For successful devolution of power to occur, community conservation efforts through CBNRM projects must be managed by a local body or organisation, responsible for administration and making decisions. Representatives of this local body must be a true reflection of the various social differences that occur within communities (Gibson and Agrawal, 1999: 24). It is also essential to focus on the poorest people in the community – they are the ones with the greatest need – by making sure the voices of the poorest and voiceless, particularly poor women and youth, are heard (DEAT, 2003: 27). The community must also decide on whether or not traditional authorities are represented in the CBNRM organisation. It is imperative that it is decided in a fair, democratic and legal way, who has the rights to which areas and resources, and what those rights and responsibilities are (DEAT, 2003: 28).

Principle four focuses on economic, social and spiritual benefits. For economic benefits to be realised it is essential that income-generating projects must not be started until the implementers of CBNRM projects are sure of where and how they are going to be able to market and sell their products (DEAT, 2003: 32). Benefits should not be promised to communities without careful business analysis. Projects must also achieve financial sustainability as soon as possible to reduce reliance on donor aid. According to DEAT (2003: 32) it is also vital that CBNRM projects are not started until government departments concerned are fully supportive of the project. Socio-cultural benefits can be enhanced through the inclusion of communities in the ownership and decision-making processes of community-based projects.

Principle five is likely to be most effective if communities are involved in developing policies for the organisation and the programme at an early stage of programme development. These policies must have teeth; meaning that fines and other penalties must get stricter when rules are broken (DEAT, 2003: 34). Policies must also be adaptable over time. As projects develop, it may be found that some policies are not working and require change.

The sixth principle requires looking at the community as a heterogeneous unit and identifying all the different beliefs, hopes and needs that they might have. People who cannot read and write must be able to participate in the CBNRM project process as well. This can be achieved through visual aids such as maps, videos, photos and fieldtrips (DEAT, 2003: 38). No person or group should be made to feel less important than the other. It is important, that at all times, people within communities are kept informed about the project, and that their views are heard. This can be achieved through regular meetings, report-backs, workshops, in newsletters and posters (DEAT, 2003: 46). This will go a long way to ensuring the transparency of the project and its aims as well as gaining community trust.

Principle seven highlights the need to be aware of old and new elite capture. When power and authority is handed over to a new group of people, such as local councillors or officials in CBNRM projects, there is always a danger that new leadership elites will develop (DEAT, 2003: 40). This can be avoided if rights and duties are clearly spelled out in the constitutions of the various management bodies. It is also useful to identify different leaders for different tasks, which helps spread the leadership role and even out power (DEAT, 2003: 40).

### **3.2. Ostrom's Criteria for Successful CBNRM Projects**

For comparative purposes, the design principles for long enduring common property institutions put forward by Ostrom (1990) cited in Anstey and De Sousa (2001: 196) are listed in Table 2:



Table 2. Ostrom’s Design principles for sustaining common property institutions:

<i>Principle</i>
Clearly defined boundaries
Congruence between appropriation and provision rules and local conditions or appropriate rules for exploiting the resource and conserving it
Collective choice arrangements or the people affected by the rules must be able to participate in changing them
Monitoring: effective monitoring procedures must be in place and monitors of rules must be resource users or accountable to them
Graduated sanctions: resource users who violate rules will be liable to sanctions graduated in terms of degree of the violation
Conflict resolution mechanisms: rapid access to low cost arenas to resolve conflicts.
Minimal recognition of rights to organize: or the right of resource users to devise their own institutions should be recognised by external (government) authorities.

It is clear that Ostrom’s design principles are aimed at minimising disputes that could derail any CBC initiative. It is therefore imperative that land rights and ownership of the land proposed for CBC utilisation are clearly defined. Ostrom also points towards the need for community participation in terms of having access to meeting venues, as well as the ability of the community to be able to change rules if they prove to be too detrimental to those who are affected by these. Nevertheless, rules that are implemented must be respected and enforced in order for the sustainable survival of communal land resources.

**3.3.1. Nature-Based Tourism: Issues of Sustainable Development**

Many CBC initiatives aim to develop and market eco-tourism ventures as a means of income generation. The main principles behind eco-tourism are to encourage environmental education, local development and conservation (Fennell, 2003: 7). For marketing purposes, eco-tourism is seen by many tour operators as being advantageous as it meets the needs of four key constituencies, namely: international aid agencies, which see eco-tourism as a new way to bring about sustainable development in rural communities; developing countries looking for new and less destructive ways of earning foreign exchange; the travel industry, which has identified a new market in socially conscious ‘green tourism’; and conservation organisations and NGOs striving for environmental protection (Thomas and Brooks, 2003: 10).

However, conceptualising eco-tourism is a complex and often misinterpreted process. Fennell argues that eco-tourism has been conceptualised as ‘something of a pious hope in the face of some very immediate social and economic dysfunctions’ (2003: 5). Therefore, the emergent need to develop economically, through eco-tourism, appears to have precluded careful consideration of the where, what, why, when, and how of eco-tourism, in the face of its utilitarian function (Fennell, 2003: 5). This has meant that many tourist operators market themselves as being eco-tourism ventures, when in reality they only fulfil some of the principles necessary to be truly branded as an eco-tourism establishment. Nature-based tourism is therefore a more accurate description of tourism that relies on attractions directly related to the natural environment. Eco-tourism, with its stricter guidelines in terms of consumptive use of natural resources, emphasis on educating participants on the flora, fauna and ecology of an area, as well as the enhancement of local communities, subsequently is a sub-sector of nature-based tourism (Fennell, 2003: 6).

The paradigm shift in conservation thinking, which emphasises the importance of linking protected area management with the economic activities of local communities, resulted in the growth of community-based tourism, which can be regarded as a sub-sector of nature-based tourism and can include eco-tourism ventures. Community-based tourism is based on the premise that tourism enterprises should not only be environmentally sensitive, but also aim to ensure that members of local communities have a high degree of control over the (income generating) activities taking place, and ensure that a significant proportion of the benefits accrue back to them (Mearns, 2003: 29). Mearns further defines community-based tourism, setting it apart from eco-tourism, as:

“Tourism initiatives that are owned by one or more defined communities, or run as joint venture partnerships with the private sector with equitable community participation, as a means of using the natural resources in a sustainable manner to improve their standard of living in an economically viable way” (Mearns, 2003: 30).

Mearns (2003) further identifies four dimensions necessary for the sustainable development of community-based tourism. Firstly, any community-based tourism project should be economically viable in that revenues should exceed costs. Secondly,



projects need to be ecologically sustainable in that the environment should not reduce in value. Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure the equitable distribution of cost and benefits among all participants in the activity. Fourthly, ventures should have a transparent organisation, recognised by all stakeholders as representing the interests of community members and reflecting true ownership (Mearns, 2003: 31).

Macleod (2003:4) states that nature-based tourism has proved to offer greater economic returns, employing about 30% more employees than pastoral agriculture and at twice the average salary. Foggin and Munster further point out that employment in conservation tends to be beneficial as it is sustainable since it is unaffected by variability in agriculture production or markets for raw materials (2000: 6). A further advantage of tourism can be seen through the exchange of information and ideas between different culture groups coming together (Green and Sibisi, 2001: 50). Improvements in local infrastructure such as roads and airstrips will also occur due to increases in tourist ventures, subsequently providing short-term job creation opportunities for local communities (Green and Sibisi, 2001: 51).

However, the tourist industry can also be a very fickle business that is often very dependent on the political climate of an area. The tourist market is often subject to fashion, one that has traditionally developed, exploited and abandoned destinations on a relatively short-term cycle (Adams, 2001: 347). Adams subsequently argues that despite the enthusiastic concept of eco-tourism for both long-term business profitability and developmental benefit, the possibility of sustaining tourism in many third world countries remains highly debatable (2001: 347).

The economic sustainability of CBC projects could be undermined by an over-reliance on tourism as an income-generating source. There is a risk that too much dependence may be placed on creating markets for tourist initiatives in certain conservation areas, causing over-saturation of the markets through increased competition for tourist numbers that would lead to decreased profits for community initiatives, and thus reduce the incentives to conserve wild land areas. Hulme and Murphree (2001) point out that many ventures have focused on the supply side and relatively limited attention has been paid to developing demand. If economic returns

are to be increased, then serious market research and new product development will be needed (Hulme and Murphree, 2001: 287).

An alternative to eco-tourism for income generation and economic sustainability of projects is the often-controversial 'consumptive use' of biological resources, meaning the sustainable harvesting of wildlife and plants (Adams, 2001: 347). This can take several forms, such as the hunting by local people on a subsistence level for bush meat, killing in return for commercial hunters' licence fees, or through the collection of marketable or consumable natural products, for example ostrich eggs. This approach fits in with the earlier mentioned dictum of use it in a sustainable way and gain economic returns for it or lose it all together. The consumptive use of wildlife is heavily reliant on the feasibility with which a 'sustainable harvest' can be defined (often involving complex scientific tasks involving lots of data collection and monitoring) (Adams, 2001: 347). This process also requires strong institutional forces (rules and regulations) to ensure that harvests of wildlife stock are done in a controlled and ethical manner.

### **3.3.2. Benefit Distribution: The Free-Rider Concept.**

According to Hulme and Murphree (2001: 281), research indicates that shifts to community conservation have generally been beneficial in aggregate terms for communities, relative to pre-existing regimes of fortress conservation. Improvements in local job creation, access to resources and upgraded social infrastructures tend to be the net social and economic benefits of CBC initiatives in return for preserving some communal lands for conservation purposes. It must be noted that except for rare cases, the additional flows of income and resources are at a scale of magnitude that means that, at best, they are a welcome increment to the livelihoods of the poor (Hulme and Murphree, 2001: 289). It is therefore fundamental for community conservation programmes not to detract from peoples' alternative means of making livelihoods, as emphasised by the sustainable livelihood approach (Figure 2, Chapter Two). Two important ways of ensuring this, as has been mentioned, are by ensuring that economic benefits accrue back to the local community that exceed the costs incurred, and by including representatives from all segments of the community in the planning and managing of projects to ensure that no specific group within a community is

disadvantaged. However, several case studies have illustrated that trying to instigate both these important principles, as well as those of the sustainable development premise, has created unforeseen problems for certain CBC projects.

It has been found, for example, that benefit-based incentives designed to induce conservation practices, such as improvements in schools and health services, can often lead to the free-rider phenomenon. For example, in Zambia the Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas (ADMAGE) in the Luangwa Valley National Park, a community project designed to conserve wildlife based upon the sustainable cull/profit taking of wild animals with the proceeds of these harvests shared with local residents, found that:

“By giving quasi-public goods to communities to abstain from hunting, programs fail to reward individuals’ behaviour. Consequently, programs create a free-rider problem in which individuals continue to hunt while receiving the benefits of community-level projects” (Gibson and Marking, 1995: 942).

To avoid the free-rider effect and ensure that conservation policies work more efficiently, more individuals from local communities need to receive sufficient benefits to change their behaviour from taking wildlife to conserving it. Gibson and Marking reiterate that three broad benefits need to occur to induce this change:

“Firstly, there needs to be a direct link to wildlife such as jobs as scouts, wage earners in the tourist industry and meat from culling. Secondly, indirect links to wildlife that consist of the standard goods dispensed by development projects such as schools and health clinics need to be encouraged. Finally, empowerment of rural residents through local participation in decision making needs to occur” (1995: 944).

Solutions to illegal hunting in new game reserves, such as the Usuthu Gorge and Mabaso community game reserves in South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal province, need to be introduced at the planning stage. Economic benefits would need to accrue relatively quickly back to the local communities to convince them of the merits of conservation. If illegal hunting persists, then it is inevitable that a hybridisation of fortress conservation and community conservation techniques will have to occur to ensure that development and conservation goals are met.

Leach, Mearns and Scoones highlight three reasons why community conservation projects have often fallen short of expectations in the past:

“Due to a tendency for the intended beneficiaries to be treated as passive recipients of project activities. There is also a tendency for projects to be too short-term in nature and over reliant on expatriate expertise. Often clear criteria by which to judge sustainability or success in meeting conservation or development goals are absent” (1999: 227).

This emphasises the need for community involvement in decision-making, as well as the importance of training locals to take over managerial positions in order to reduce the reliance on expatriate knowledge. This cannot be achieved in the short-term and requires realistic long-term time frames to ensure the success and sustainability of community conservation projects.

### **3.3.3. Devolution: Local Municipality Versus Tribal Authority**

Devolving decision making to the community level, aimed at empowering communities and enhancing the social element of the sustainable development model, is often a complex process that can lead to detrimental results if not handled properly. Authority over Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) went from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNPWLM) at the national level to Rural District Councils (RDC's) (Jones and Murphree, 2001: 45). Although decisions were devolved to a district level the decision making lay in the hands of a small group of elite who appropriated the bulk of the revenues generated by their producer communities and failed to meet project objectives that would benefit the wider community (Jones and Murphree, 2001: 49). This undermines the CBC principle, which stipulates that local organisations, including local government and community organisations, must work effectively together in order to manage local resources for the benefit of local people and the environment (DEAT, 2003: 21).

In order to avoid local level government bureaucracy, it has been suggested that local communities retain the revenues they create in trust funds and determine how to distribute the income through elected community councils or tribal authority



structures (Venter, 200: 4). The problem with using traditional structures is that African 'indigenous institutions' show inconsistent levels of democracy. Such institutions are democratic in so far as traditional authorities consult their subjects whenever critical decisions are taken (Ntsebeza, 2003: 80). However, indigenous institutions are based on ascribed, hereditary rule. Rural residents do not have the freedom to choose which institutions and individuals should rule them thus the overall tribal authority process is essentially undemocratic in nature (Ntsebeza, 2003: 80). The devolution process from RDCs to tribal authorities would involve transferring authority to the community, which is often an unpopular move amongst local government officials as it means that they lose out on authority and potential direct revenues for their departments. For this reason, it is often hard to negotiate complete devolution to community councils. Tensions between chiefs or tribal authorities and the broader community may also arise, as chiefs will be scared of devolving too much of their own decision-making powers to elected community councils.

Anstey and De Sousa point out that in Mozambique there is a 'crisis of authority and within this crisis government administration and traditional structures function in an uneasy and complex set of compromises' (2001, 199). Local authorities tend to be secular in outlook, whereas traditional authorities, such as chiefs, often have a historically sacred and spiritual role to play within communities, which gives them prestige amongst local residents and is an added reason why they should be brought on side to ensure the success of community conservation projects. However, a study carried out in Mozambique's Chimanimani district demonstrated that traditional institutions can evolve more complex institutional arrangements for the management of scarce natural resources, which are far more robust, efficient, equitable and requiring lower inputs than those preferred and introduced by formal programmes of the state, donors and NGOs (Anstey and De Sousa, 2001: 205).

Nevertheless tribal authorities tend to be very autocratic and undemocratic in nature, which means certain provisions have to be put in place (see Chapter Five) to make tribal authorities more democratic and gender equitable in nature. The strengths and weaknesses of the various competing institutional structures must be understood if community conservation programmes are to achieve maximum benefit from the various role players. One way of achieving effective participation of competing

authority figures is to have representatives from both the tribal authorities and local municipalities sit on community conservation project steering committees.

The debate over devolution of power between tribal authorities and local municipalities, in rural areas where most CBC initiatives are located, is an interesting and contentious issue in South Africa. In keeping with the democratic principles within the constitution, the post-1994 state aims to establish new democratic and accountable structures at a local level, with significant community participation, for land administration and management (Ntsebeza, 2003: 56). The new constitution requires that municipalities, consisting of elected representatives, be established in the whole of South Africa, including areas of the former Bantustans, which would go a long way to diminishing the power and authority held by tribal authorities throughout South Africa. The reason for the amount of power tribal authorities enjoy in South Africa is a legacy of the former apartheid regime, which exacerbated and enhanced the power base of pre-existing tribal authorities. During the apartheid era, the government owned communal land and used tribal authority structures to administer local government and development activities in these areas. As a result, rural residents were largely excluded from the administration and management of the land, which was controlled by the tribal authorities, dominated by hereditary traditional authorities that often became highly dictatorial and tyrannical (Ntsebeza, 2003: 57). The ANC and other political parties are trying to redress these undemocratic injustices of the past by increasing the powers of local municipalities. This political debate over tribal authorities and local municipalities has had unforeseen impacts on CBC initiatives in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal Province, where support for tribal authorities is relatively strong, as illustrated by the Mabaso Case Study (Chapter Five).

#### **3.3.4. Community Participation and Elite Capture**

Complete devolution to the community does not always solve the problem of elite capture, which is the inequitable distribution of profits and benefits to an elite group. ADMADE in Zambia, in trying to determine the most equitable way of distributing benefits, chose local chiefs to chair wildlife management sub-authorities in an attempt to 'reinvest chiefs with some of their former symbolic functions' (Gibson and Marking, 1995: 946). Unfortunately, chiefs tended to act with nepotism and out of

self-interest in the sense that development projects coincidentally were often situated in and around chiefdoms (Gibson and Marking, 1995: 946). Such inequitable practices within communities, namely nepotism and elite capture, go a long way to diminishing, as opposed to enhancing, the socio-cultural element of the sustainable development model.

Hulme and Murphree point out that to avoid such elite capture concerted attempts to use participatory procedures, by having representatives selected through electoral processes, and the delivery of benefits in a transparent often indivisible form (schools, health centres and village water supplies) that are spread fairly in terms of geographical location, need to occur (2001: 289). Transparency is crucial in gaining the trust and support of projects from local communities and can be enhanced through regular meetings with community members to inform them on income spending plans and project progress.

A case study of the Mavhulani Bush Camp Project, a joint venture agreement between the local community and a private investor in South Africa's Mpumalanga Province on the edge of the Kruger National Park, showed that certain employment procedures can be implemented to avoid nepotism and elite capture (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 143). Firstly, any prospective employee for the Mavhulani Bush camp has to come from the local community. Secondly, the employment of members of the same family, such as husbands or wives, is not allowed so as to prevent two or more incomes from the initiatives going to the same family. Thirdly, in an attempt to avoid nepotism, interviews are only ever carried out on a first name basis in order to prevent the status of the individual in the local community from becoming known and averting accusations of biasing the decision to employ a person (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 143). A positive effect of reducing nepotism in this way is that employment is spread more equitably.

### **3.3.5. The Private Sector and Community-Based Conservation**

The private sector provides essential investments in many CBC projects such as tourist lodge infrastructure, marketing and skills training, due to the fact that it is often hard for unskilled community members to gain access to formal credit structures. In



return for private investment, communities offer their locations for development as well as abundant pools of relatively cheap labour. Despite the potential benefits that the private sector offers, it is imperative that the community tries to equalise its power base in order to negotiate more beneficial terms for themselves. The Kunene Region in Northern Namibia offers several case study examples of various different, often contradictory, methods that communities have used to negotiate with the private sector with various levels of success.

A lot of private sector concessionaires in the Kunene Region lease land directly from the government, and therefore do not have a legal responsibility to local communities. However, several private tourist initiatives have entered into relationships with the communities, mainly through 'enlightened self-interest' (Jones, 2001: 172). One such example is the Etendeka Mountain Camp in Damaraland that added an extra bed levy that was paid back into the community. It was found that the decision on levy money investment should be determined purely by the local communities and not influenced by the private firm (Jones, 2001: 172). This was expected to produce an improved working relationship between private sector and the community. In practice decisions on investment are still very much down to the goodwill and enlightenment of the private firm and the community has no real negotiating power (Jones, 2001: 174).

A slightly different relationship occurs at the Kunene region's Damaraland Camp, which is a joint venture between the local community of the area and a private safari company. In this case the community has a type of lease from government on the land on which the lodge is situated. This lease strengthens the community's position in its negotiations with the company and establishes a more equal partnership (Jones, 2001: 172). The community's position was strengthened further with the help from a local NGO called Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), a public interest legal firm that employs some government resource economists. The latter helped negotiate a deal with the private company, which includes managerial level training for community members and an option for the community to take over the full running of the camp after a certain period with a guarantee by the company to maintain the supply of tourists to the camp (Jones, 2001: 172). This increase in negotiating power is a crucial tool to enhancing the social and economic elements of the sustainable development model.

This same community has taken over another site in the area and subsequently turned down a new investor not prepared to meet the same standards as set by the Damaraland camp (Jones, 2001: 173). This emphasises the amount of benefits a community can gain out of potential investors if the community is instilled with enough negotiating power. The greater investment a community can negotiate from a private investor, the more likely a CBC project will work, as more benefits will accrue back to the community if implementation is successful, subsequently gaining their full support for the project. Direct community leases over the land means that the community consequently owns an asset that the private sector wants and is prepared to negotiate for. As Jones points out, communities will be able to gain maximum financial returns through competitive bidding for their concessions and will need the continued support of NGOs and governments to play an advisory role in ensuring that they have enough information and understanding of business practices to negotiate with confidence (2001: 173).

The process must work both ways, and communities must therefore be able to offer the private sector something worthwhile, otherwise no investment will be attracted into CBC areas. The scenic beauty of many communal rural areas is a major draw-card for private investors, but communities must ensure the survival of these areas by sustaining their high non-use values, in return for economic and social benefits accruing from eco-tourism initiatives. If the biodiversity of these communal CBC areas are degraded in any way by community practices, then private investors will simply pull out. These community/ private partnerships therefore rely on a clear commitment from the community to compromise on various land uses that may be detrimental to the economic non-use value of an area.

In order to help market and attract potential investors in Namibia, community-based tourism enterprises combined to form their own NGO, known as the Namibian Community-Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA), which helped open up dialogue with private sector tourism organisations to provide information about CBC initiatives and promote community friendly approaches (Jones, 2001: 173). This helped in reducing the duplication of marketing efforts by CBC initiatives and in spreading awareness by representing all the CBC projects under one umbrella.

According to Viljoen and Naicker (2000: 142) it is imperative that any agreements made between private investors and local communities should not raise expectations of local communities or lead to unsustainable practices aimed at generating quick incomes. A study at the Mukuya Park in South Africa showed that the managers of the reserve wanted to generate quick incomes through hunting. The short-term gain from hunting proved to be unsustainable, as the park could not support this activity, and all the community received as a result of the effort was 'a few hundred Rand and about a hundred kilograms of meat' (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 143).

### **3.3.6. Long-term Sustainability of CBC initiatives**

Kenya's Amboseli National Park, which was declared a conservation area in 1974, has been cited in the past as a good example of where conservation initiatives have led to positive developmental outcomes during the mid to late 1970s. As a result of tourism initiatives and park outreach schemes, a school and a cattle dip were built, wood and gravel were sold to the park by the local communities and campsite fees were regularly being paid (Adams, 2001: 344). Unfortunately, during the 1980s this seemingly efficient system deteriorated for a number of reasons.

Amboseli is located in an area that is grazed by the Masai cattle in the dry season, with cattle making up to 60% of the large animal biomass (Lindsey, 1987 in Adams, 2001: 344). When Amboseli was declared a national park, a series of agreements were made between the Masai and the government, which meant that the Masai gave up the right to graze in the new reserve in return for joint ownership of surrounding land in group ranches, piped water supplies, compensation for lost production through wildlife grazing, economic opportunities in the form of tourist lodges, and developments such as a school and dispensary (Adams, 2001: 344). The whole process was undermined due to the fact that the borehole and pipeline systems never became fully functional due to the government's lack of capacity to carry out its promises. After 1981 wildlife utilisation fees began to be paid irregularly. The fees that were paid were retained by the treasury (Adams, 2001: 344). Promises were made in the beginning that subsequently raised community expectations only for them to be

quashed when the project objectives failed in the long-term. Adams sums up the situation in the following way:

“The Amboseli Park Plan, like previous programmes, failed to provide the Masai community with continuous appreciable benefit in return for compromises in their use of land. Income to the Masai was too little and too unpredictable and continuing cultural, social and economic change among the Masai undermined static assumptions about the long-term acceptability and sustainability of the group ranching system” (2001: 344).

As such, poaching of large game animals such as rhino and elephant started to become a common occurrence within the actual national park. This emphasises the long-term commitment necessary to ensuring that the community continually benefits from reserves in order to sustain their long-term support for such conservation initiatives.

Long-term time frames need to be put in place by skilled professionals and donor funders involved in CBC initiatives due to the fact that community projects in remote areas take a longer than usual amount of time and energy to implement. One of the reasons CBC projects take so long to implement is because every basic need, from infrastructure to skills development, needs to be implemented from scratch. Funding organisations that demand quick short-term results undermine the process that in reality requires a lot of patience and perseverance. This long-term time frame required contradicts, in the short term, the identified necessity to ensure that local communities own and run their own project. The aim of the donors and funders, therefore, should be to build capacity amongst the local community, through training schemes and providing guidance and technical advice, in order to ensure that the local community are able to eventually take over the project and run it in a sustainable manner. In the interim period, the donors, funders and other stakeholders should make every effort to include and incorporate the local community and their ideas in the implementation phase.

The East Usambaras Agricultural Development and Environmental Conservation Project in Tanzania exemplifies further problems with regards to trying to achieve too much too quickly and not focusing enough resources into specific areas over a long enough time frame. This project, funded by the International Union for the



Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) began in 1987 with the joint aims being to improve the living standards of the people; to protect the functions of the forest in the area; and to preserve the biodiversity of the region (Adams, 2001: 345). Emphasis was put on revenue generation and development through a wide range of initiatives from agriculture extensions to attempts to control illegal pit sawing, with little progress being made after four years of implementation (Adams, 2001: 345). Adams cites several reasons for the project failing:

“The problems of the East Usambaras Project included lack of funds, leading in turn to a lack of breadth in technical expertise, and the way in which capital and energy were dissipated in too wide a range of activities. Behind many of these problems lay a lack of feasibility study, a common failing in conservation projects” (2001: 346).

The lessons learnt from the Usambaras project in the initial stages, was the necessity to have a high level of skills on the part of the project implementation staff, which in many CBC initiatives tends to involve an advisory and/or funding NGO, in order to ensure the continuation of the project in the long-term. The Usambaras case study emphasises the need to focus on a few initiatives at a time within a project in order not to overstretch the resource and skills base of any scheme. In order for skilled staff members to be able to see the implementation of CBC projects through to fruition, substantial funds are needed in line with realistic long-term time frames. Adams (2001: 345) points out that:

“Clear and precise objectives, careful evaluation of the costs and benefits of project components at the level of the individual household, long-term commitment to funding, and strong local participatory linkages are essential. Projects of this sort will not be cheap to implement, and will not yield results quickly. Furthermore, there is a real risk that positive impacts of the project on the local economy will be transient and dependent on the maintenance of flows of project revenues.”

This is not to say that the eventual aim of any CBC project is to remain reliant on donor funding and outside technical aid to ensure the long-term continual flow of benefits back to the community. All CBC initiatives must aim to eventually become fully community owned and self-sufficient. For this reason, deadlines must be set to ensure that this happens; otherwise the process and continual dependence on outsiders will continue indefinitely, which is unsustainable and not the intention of the CBC

concept. Processes must be set in place, during the implementation phase of any project, to train local community members and build their capacities in order for them to become less reliant on outside professionals for advice and financial assistance. Skilled professionals, funding organisations and NGOs involved with CBC initiatives must therefore all work towards ensuring that projects are sustainable when they inevitably withdraw.

### **3.3.7. Competing Social Development Choices in Conservation Areas**

Project planners need to be aware of the potential long-term impacts of social development in and around conservation areas. According to Murombedzi (1999: 290), local communities in several CAMPFIRE areas in Zimbabwe, despite CAMPFIRE benefits per household being highest where human population densities were low, actively encouraged in-migration settlement so that the community could quickly constitute a large enough constituency to leverage development (i.e. schools and roads) from the government. Wildlife was therefore seen as an asset that could be expended in order to subsidise long-term development and make way for agriculture and livestock. The latter was a more popular activity as evidenced by the preference given to redirecting revenues, at the community's request, from wildlife assets into agricultural schemes (Murombedzi, 1999: 292). Murombedzi stipulates that a likely reason for the apparent lack of interest in the long-term survival of conservation principles is that average wildlife incomes were insufficient to constitute a source of capital accumulation for most CAMPFIRE households (1999: 293). It could be argued that CAMPFIRE may have recognised more conservation benefits had the communities involved gained more devolved rights instead of the RDC's that created bureaucratic bottle-necks preventing communities from receiving their full fair share of the benefits. If the communities had received their fair share of the benefits, then there may have been more of an incentive for them to reinvest in conservation, as opposed to agriculture.

### **3.4. Research Questions**

Four broad objectives helped formulate the research questions that produced the findings within this study. The first objective aimed at describing the two main case study examples, namely the MCGR and the UGCCA. Questions that helped formulate this objective were: What was the history of the CBC project? Who were the main players responsible for setting up the initiatives? What is the current status of the project? What resources were needed for the projects to become a reality? Who needed to be approached and consulted in order for the initiatives to become a reality? The second objective aimed at determining what these identified key role players perceived to be the most relevant issues and criteria for the successful implementation of CBC initiatives. The third objective set out to establish whether necessary criteria identified from other sources of information were included in the implementation of the two case study initiatives. For example, out of the criteria for successful implementation of CBC initiatives listed by DEAT (DEAT, 2003:21) and Ostrom (Anstey and De Sousa, 1990: 196), which criteria were present or absent from the case study examples? Sub-questions related to this objective were used to determine what the quality of communication between stakeholders was like; whether different livelihood strategies were being maintained and encouraged and to determine whether effective institutions, policies and laws were being implemented by local people's legitimate and representative organisations. The fourth objective of the study was to determine what the effect of including or excluding some of the identified criteria would be. Subsequently, the broader research question for this objective was how do various criteria affect the social, economic and biological elements of the CBC project? These four objectives and the subsequent related questions provided a framework around which this study was conducted in order to determine what criteria are needed to implement a successful CBC project.

This chapter has introduced various case study examples of CBC projects from around Africa and illustrated certain problems that the different projects have encountered, such as various types of elite capture, devolution of authority to the wrong levels and the positive and negative aspects of incorporating traditional structures into CBC initiatives. The chapter has also identified criteria deemed necessary for the sustainable implementation and running of CBC projects (Tables 1



and 2), which form the conceptual basis for answering questions on what criteria are needed for successful implementation of CBC programmes. The seven key principles put forward by DEAT and Ostrom respectively go a long way to guiding the enhancement of both the sustainable development model and the sustainable livelihood approach model, by enhancing the role local communities play in the implementation of CBC projects. These principles and criteria are used to assess and assist in the development of formal community institutions to manage common property resources in a sustainable fashion, and are used as a basis for identifying the pre-requisites for the effective management and implementation of institutions necessary for sustaining community conservation projects. The ideas and arguments formed in the previous chapter and this chapter have not only helped form the research questions for this study, but have helped direct the nature and scope of the primary research described and discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology and Case Study Over-View**

#### **4.1. Case Studies: Advantages and Disadvantages**

The case study strategy is the most appropriate research strategy to analyse the complexities and contradictions relating to the sustainable development model on which many CBC projects are based. Case studies provide an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena such as identifying conflicting perceptions, views and opinions of the various stakeholders trying to put into practise specific CBC initiatives. An analysis of cases also allows us to establish what problems and successes have been encountered in different contexts. These profiles also aim to determine what ways the different stakeholders are working together towards enhancing the three elements in the sustainable development model (Figure 1).

Case studies are beneficial as they serve exploratory, descriptive and explanatory purposes that help generate theory and initiate change (Blaike, 2000: 213). In case studies the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures, mainly qualitative techniques, such as intensive interviews, questionnaires, self-histories, documents, case reports and letters during a sustained period of time (Creswell, 1994: 12, in Blaikie, 2000: 216). Case study data collection can also rely on participant observation, where the investigator takes on a role other than that of a passive observer and participates in the events being studied (Robson, 1993: 159). Robson (1993: 163) identifies several general skills required by case study investigators. Firstly, good question asking skills are needed to enquire why events appear to have happened or to be happening. Secondly, good listening is essential to take in a lot of new information without bias; noting the exact words said and appreciating content. Thirdly, adaptiveness and flexibility are required in order to be willing to change plans if the unanticipated occurs. Fourthly, a lack of bias is important to avoid substantiating a preconceived position. The investigator must therefore be open to alternative findings and be prepared to acknowledge them in an objective manner.

Criticisms of case studies in general include a concern with biased findings being presented as a consequence of the researcher influencing the results due to a lack of replication (Blaikie, 2000: 218). There is also an argument that case studies do not give a good generalisation of the overall picture, as each case tends to have too many unique aspects, and if several cases are used it is difficult to establish their comparability (Blaikie, 2000: 218). Case studies can also produce unmanageable amounts of data. The quality of a case study is also dependent to a large extent on the competence of the investigator. A case study is not a 'soft' option in terms of analytical skills and knowledge of procedure, due to the fact that there are no fast routine procedures that simply involve following a formula (Robson, 1993: 162).

#### **4.2. The Process of Identifying Case Studies for the Research Project**

Having decided on the CBC research focus, the researcher approached KZN Tourism to determine their involvement with community conservation initiatives. Mrs Fathima Kolia, a research manager at KZN Tourism, indicated that there were several projects which KZN Tourism were involved in, that would be relevant and available for research. These projects included the Ngome Community Game Reserve and a community tourism initiative at the Lilani Hot Springs. Unfortunately, shortly after approaching KZN Tourism, the Ngome project was put on hold due to divisions within the community. The Lilani Hot Springs project was rejected as a suitable case because the project was not sufficiently advanced to contribute to the measurement of the effects of longer-term implementation.

Mrs Kolia suggested getting in touch with an NGO called the Wildlands Trust who are involved with CBC initiatives and who work closely with KZN Tourism. The Wildlands Trust was established in 1989 and was the brainchild of a number of significant conservation leaders, including Mr N. Steele and Dr I. Player (Peace Parks Foundation, 2002: 1). The Trust was established as a direct result of the increasing pressure being put on the environment in KZN by rapidly growing rural communities needing land and natural resources.

The Wildlands Trust's vision is the re-establishment of the connections between islands of relatively unspoiled biodiversity, allowing the free migration of wildlife and

the restoration of vibrant and viable ecosystems throughout the region (Peace Parks Foundation, 2002: 2). The approach and philosophy that the Trust uses to achieve this aim is through the need to balance their vision with the needs of the people living in and around these corridors and islands. Subsequently, the Trust has adopted a sustainable development approach that is guided by the Trust's conservation SPACE program, 'where SPACE is an anagram for Species, People, And the Conservation of the Environment' (Peace Parks Foundation, 2003: 2). SPACE recognises and includes the needs of rural poor people in conservation planning and management, thus incorporating the new conservation concept of community-based conservation into its philosophy.

The Wildlands Trust works closely with several partners to help achieve its goals, including KZN Wildlife, AMAFA (provincial cultural heritage agency), KZN Tourism, Greater St Lucia Wetland Park Authority (GSLWP), Wilderness Foundation, World Wide Fund for Nature (SA), Peace Park Foundation and Bird Life (SA). The Wildlands Trust has set itself the task of raising funds from the private sector for conservation. Donors for the Trust include AVIS, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, DaimlerChrysler, Ford Foundation, Global Nature Fund, INVESTEC, Kathleen Hastie Trust, Lufthansa, NEDCOR, Richards Bay Coal Terminal, SAPPI, South African Breweries, UNILEVER, US Fish and Wildlife and the Victor Daitz Foundation (CCF, 2004: 2). The variety of these donors perhaps reflects the increase in corporate responsibility for important issues such as nature conservation and poverty alleviation.

Dr Andrew Venter, the present CEO of the Wildlands Trust, was extremely approachable and helpful in relation to suggesting research topics and potential case study areas for analysis. It was decided that two of the projects that the Wildlands Trust is currently involved with, the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (UGCCA) and the Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR), might be appropriate cases. A critical characteristic making these cases relevant is that the projects are both relatively mature in terms of their implementation processes. This maturity provides a more holistic picture of the challenges and successes faced throughout the stages of setting up and implementing a CBC project. Gaining access to case research sites is one of the potential problems of case study research. For this project the

Wildlands Trust was prepared to provide all the necessary contact details for interviews at both project sites. Without the Wildlands Trust's influence, it would have been nearly impossible to gather all the necessary information. According to Robson (1993: 161) the experiences of a second case study analysis may build upon the first case study, perhaps carrying the investigation into an area suggested by the first study; or the second study area may complement the first by focusing on an area not originally covered. The cases selected for this research project are similar in purpose – community based conservation – and it may be possible to achieve 'analytical generalisation' through researching more than one case.

#### **4.3.1. Data Collection**

One of the characteristics of a case study is that the researcher is likely to use various sources of information as well as using multiple methods to collect information. For this study, information was collected from documents, observations and interviews.

#### **4.3.2. Documents**

Literature – including material from published books, journals, newspaper articles, the Internet, magazine articles, and working papers for various conferences – was used to understand key concepts in the field of sustainable development and community-based conservation, to develop a theoretical framework and identify examples of CBC projects and characteristics of their implementation.

An initial use of documents, such as the Mabaso and Usuthu project reports, committee meeting minutes and Wildland Trust reports were used to gather background information on the Wildlands Trust and the CBC cases to provide a contextual framework. In addition, maps, photographs, census data, government reports and annual reports of the workings of CBC initiatives were used as sources of information. Further into the study the researcher used minutes from committee meetings to identify activities taking place within the research sites as well as measure composition of participating groups and the relationships between role players. Interview schedules were developed from early data gathering and observation.

#### **4.3.3. Observation**

Observations were widely used to establish what was going on in the research sites and to observe communication between various CBC stakeholders at meetings. Dr Andrew Venter facilitated an introductory fieldtrip to the study areas on the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2004. This was a crucial reconnaissance trip to conduct field observations and gain invaluable knowledge about the histories, locations and context of both the Mabaso and Usuthu Game Reserves. The excursion offered the chance to arrange interviews with key individuals involved with the implementation of both projects. During the field trip the researcher attended the Mabaso Steering Committee meeting held at the Mabaso Tribal Court on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2004. This represented an important opportunity, as the researcher was able to observe and record communication between the Tribal Authority and the Mabaso Community Game Reserve Steering Committee. The researcher was also able to view minutes taken from previous meetings. The field observations and participation in community meetings proved to be an enlightening experience for this author. The researcher was able to observe various attributes relevant to assessing the status of the CBC projects, such as damaged fences at Mabaso, the progress made with the first eco-friendly tourist accommodation facility on the shores of Lake Sibaya (see Chapter Five) and the windmill and cattle troughs placed outside the Usuthu Gorge Reserve fence (see Chapter Six). Unfortunately the researcher missed a vital opportunity to record some of these observations on film. The camera equipment failed on this reconnaissance trip, and the researcher did not gain access to the same areas on later visits because the focus of study shifted to interviewing key informants and the researcher did not have a 4x4 vehicle needed to revisit the areas.

#### **4.3.4. Interviews**

One of the objectives of this research project is to find out what key stakeholders view as important for the success of a CBC project. To achieve this objective it was necessary to interview various stakeholders from NGOs and the community structures involved. To add to the knowledge already gained from the reconnaissance trip about the range of different expert perceptions, as well as an in-depth history of both the projects, semi-structured interviews were carried out with members of the involved



communities and representatives from both KZN Wildlife and the Wildlands Trust. The interviews were semi-structured and included questions contingent on the area of expertise of the person being interviewed. All respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and agreed to their responses and quotes being used in this thesis.

A semi-structured interview style was chosen with the benefit of such methodology being 'that the interviewed subject's viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in a relatively openly designed interview situation than in a standardised interview' (Flick, 1998: 76). Semi-structured interviews are also deemed appropriate because they provide the opportunity for the interviewer to respond to information given and obtain a more accurate and complete picture relatively quickly.

Interviews were arranged with Dr Andrew Venter and Sue McClintock from the Wildlands Trust. Mr Watson Nxumalo, from the Mabaso steering committee, Mr Frey, the community officer at Usuthu, and Mr Mandla Tembe the KZN Wildlife representative for the UGCCA. Interviews were conducted at the various research sites. Permission was obtained to quote material from interviews. For purposes of anonymity and confidentiality each respondents' identity has been coded for analysis. The observations and notes from the Mabaso Steering committee meeting have also been included in the coding system. Citations and quotes from interviews and the committee meeting attended by the author are recorded as CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4 and CCF in the text.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of time and ease of access, the author was unable to gain interviews with donor agencies and the private investors involved in both projects, which would have provided a more holistic view of the challenges faced in implementing a CBC initiative.

#### **4.4. Analysis**

The process of data analysis chosen was an ad hoc use of different approaches and techniques for meaning generation. Miles and Huberman (1994) cited in Kvale (1996: 204) identified thirteen such tactics for generating meaning that are arranged roughly



from the descriptive to the explanatory, and from the concrete to the more conceptual and abstract:

“Noting patterns, themes (1), seeing plausibility (2), and clustering (3) help the analyst see “what goes with what.” Making metaphors (4), like the preceding three tactics, is a way to achieve more integration among diverse pieces of data. Counting (5) is also familiar way to see “what’s there.” Making contrasts-comparisons (6) is a pervasive tactic that sharpens understanding. Differentiation sometimes is needed, too, as in partitioning variables (7). We also need tactics for seeing things and their relationships more abstractly. These include subsuming particulars under the general (8); factoring (9), an analogue to a familiar quantitative technique; noting relations between variables (10); and finding intervening variables (11). Finally, how can we systematically assemble a coherent understandable set of data? The tactics discussed are building a logical chain of evidence (12) and making conceptual/theoretical coherence (13)” (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 245-246).

Whilst incorporating some of the above techniques, data analysis for this thesis tended to be more of a hybridisation of narrative structuring and meaning categorisation. Narrative structuring entails:

“The temporal and social organisation of a text to bring out its meaning. It focuses on the stories told during an interview and works out their structures and their plots. If there are no stories told spontaneously, a narrative analysis may attempt to create a coherent story out of the many happenings reported through out an interview” (Kvale, 1996: 192).

Meaning categorisation was used to reduce, organise and structure the large interview texts into specific categories that were largely based around the identified set criteria deemed necessary for successful CBC implementation discussed in Chapter Two.

#### **4.5. Overview of the Case Study Region**

Two community projects serve as cases for this study. Both the Mabaso and Usuthu Gorge Community Game Reserves are situated in Maputaland, South Africa (Figure 8, Appendix A). Maputaland is located in the remote northern parts of South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province (Figure 9, Appendix A). According to Foggin and Munster (2000: 4), the scenic quality, diversity of wildlife resources and cultural and historical heritage of KZN, provide the province with an important comparative advantage that could be enhanced and further utilised through nature-based tourism

ventures to help stimulate rural livelihood strategies in remote communal areas through CBC projects. As such, KZN lends itself to the possibility of introducing sustainable community conservation projects as a strategy to providing poor households with alternative incomes and livelihoods, in order to help alleviate poverty while enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the region.

The people of KZN are amongst the poorest in the country with an income per capita that lies 25% below the national average. Compared to other regions of South Africa, KZN has a medium Human Development Index characterised by a poorly skilled labour force, as well as high unemployment levels in rural areas (Foggin and Munster, 2000: 3). The livelihood strategies in the rural areas of KZN tend to be limited, and most of the population is dependent on subsistence agriculture (Elliot, 1996: 10). The Mathenjwa Tribe, which is the community that lives in and around the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (UGCCA), exemplifies this as the Peace Parks Foundation (2002: 7) points out:

“According to the available census data there are 88 households in the Mathenjwa Traditional Area with a population of approximately 546 people. The estimated average annual household income is \$400. The main sources of energy and light in this area are paraffin and candles. There is no locally available electricity. There are no flush toilets, and only some pit latrines” (2002: 7).

The UGCCA, if implemented and run properly, could go some way to help alleviate the poverty that exists in the Mathenjwa Tribal area by aiming to fulfil the sustainable development premise through the enhancement of the model’s economic, social and biological goals.

The Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR) and UGCCA are working examples of community conservation projects in progress. The projects share some characteristics. Both projects are joint initiatives between the local community tribal authorities who have tenure over the land, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and the Wildlands Trust (Bishop, 2003:1). The stakeholders of both cases aim to create community-owned nature-based tourism ventures. As poverty is a leading cause of land degradation, its alleviation through nature-based tourism is seen as a key to prosperity in the region, which is helped by the fact that ‘the fastest growing industry

in the world, tourism, will have a growing need for one of the World's fastest shrinking commodities: wilderness' (Fox, 2003: 63).

Both projects are part of broader plans. The UGCCA forms part of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (LTCA) spanning South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland. The idea behind transfrontier conservation areas is to link conservation areas across international borders, as well as within countries, in order to restore ancient migratory routes and biomes, create sustainable and eco-friendly land-use in trans-frontier regions and generate income for communities that live there (Fox, 2003: 63). The UGCCA also forms a critical part of the Maputoland Centre of Endemism that was highlighted by the World Conservation Union at the recent World Parks Congress, which aims to enhance the biological component of the sustainable development premise by bringing endangered species under protection (Bishop, 2003: 1). The Mabaso Game Reserve forms an expansion of the Greater St Lucia Wetlands Conservation Authority (GSLWCA) (Bishop, 2003: 1).

Having determined the type of methodology used in this study, as well as introducing the study area, the focus now turns to looking specifically at the two different case studies.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR): Project Analysis**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter gives a historical overview of the MCGR as well as an outline of the institutional structures that have developed in order to run the project. The chapter goes on to describe the processes involved with the four-phases of implementation that have almost been completed for the Mabaso project, namely: the community awareness and consensus building phase; a government support and approval phase; a resource assessment and partner identification phase; and a project construction and operations phase. The discussion then looks at the various successes and challenges that the MCGR project has encountered in terms of enhancing the social, economic and sustainable livelihood strategy goals of the sustainable development premise throughout the implementation process.

#### **5.2. Mabaso Community Game Reserve: Historical Overview**

The Mabaso Game Reserve was one of the first community conservation areas initiated in South Africa. It falls under the authority of the Mabaso Tribal Authority (MTA), and lies to the west, south and north of Lake Sibaya in the Ingwavuma magisterial district (Figure 10, Appendix A) (Felton, 2000: 4). The concept of a CBC game reserve in the Mabaso tribal area was first initiated by the Mabaso community in the early 1990's with the help of the then KwaZulu-Natal Department of Nature Conservation (now incorporated into the current provincial conservation agency) (Venter, 2000: 4). Approximately 2 700 hectares of communal land was established as a community conservation area that was stocked with antelope and other plains game. Prior to this, the major land uses of the area were moderate amounts of subsistence agriculture mainly along the lakefront, some cattle herding and Ilala plant harvesting for woven baskets (CC2, 2004: 2). The community had considered a tree plantation as an alternative land use. However, a plantation was deemed to be too detrimental to the water level of Lake Sibaya (CC2, 2004: 1). Consequently, the late Inkhosi (chief) Zikhali of the Mabaso tribe travelled intensively throughout the Mabaso tribal area discussing the proposal of a community conservation area with community members

before deciding to go ahead with the idea (CC2, 2004: 1). According to Venter (2000: 5) the initial project failed due to the fact that:

“In the political unrest leading up to South Africa’s 1994 political transition, a dissident group within the community accused the community leadership of selling the land. This group stirred up the broader community and they subsequently invaded the reserve area, pulling down sections of the fence and killing the game that had been introduced.”

Despite this setback, the Inkhosi, after visiting and conducting meetings in various different community wards, felt confident enough to re-initiate the CBC project and approached the Wildlands Trust for advice and financial assistance (CC2, 2004: 1).

The Wildlands Trust agreed to help the CBNRM initiative at Mabaso on a funding and advisory basis and initiated four major steps to try and necessitate the successful implementation of the project. These four steps included:

- 1) A community awareness and consensus-building phase
- 2) A resource assessment and partner(s) identification phase
- 3) A government support and approval phase; and
- 4) A project construction and operations phase (Venter, 2000: 3).

The above four phases have almost been completed at Mabaso and have taken roughly ten years to implement, emphasizing the long-term commitment necessary from funding agencies, NGOs and skilled professionals necessary to ensure that the CBC concept is able to transform from an idea into a working reality. The time frame and implementation stages for the four phases at Mabaso are illustrated in Figure 6. As is clear from Figure 6, it can take up to ten years to establish a CBC project.

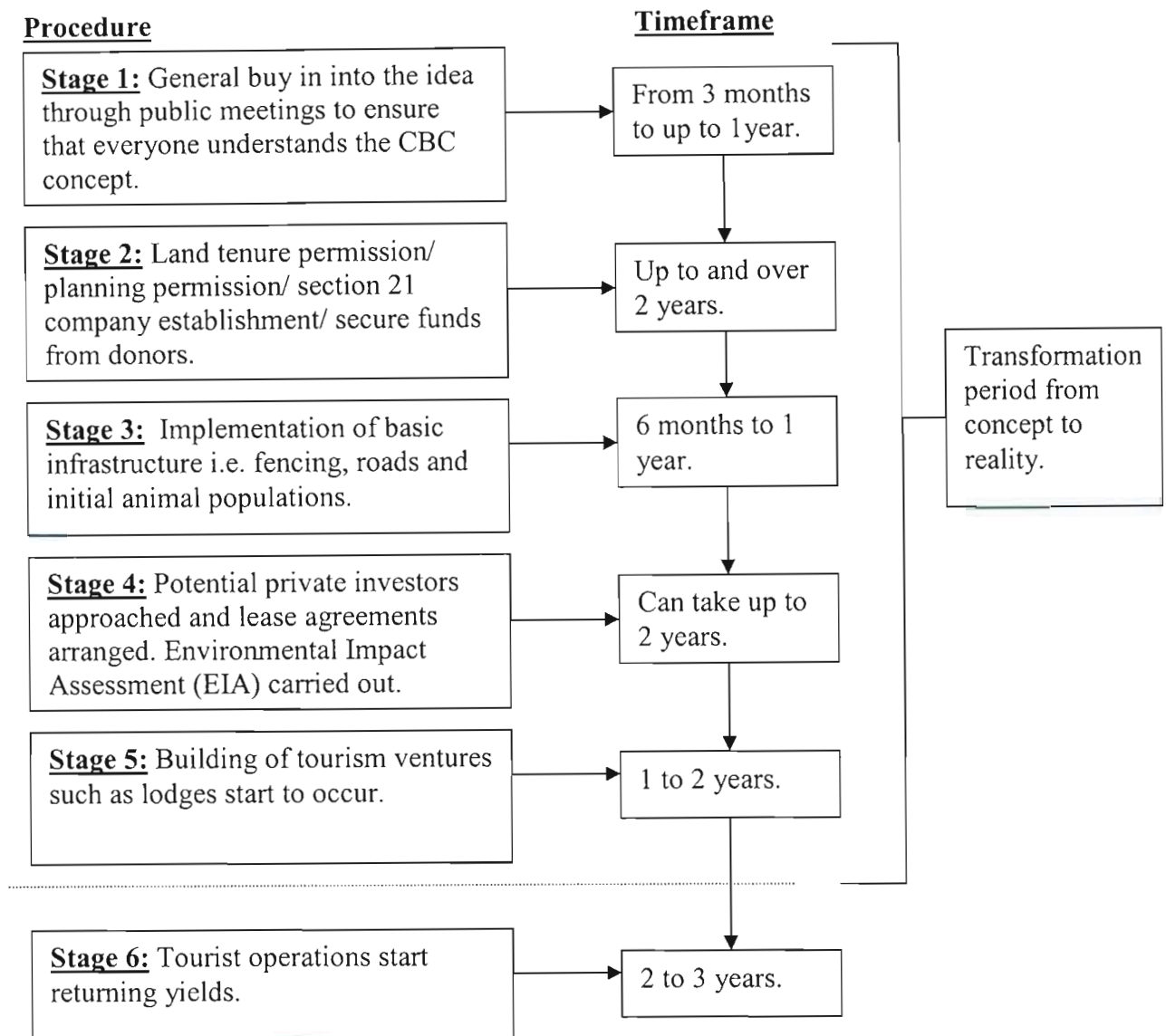


Figure 6. Project Process Map for the Mabaso Game Reserve (after Venter, 2004: 4-5)

The major challenge of any CBC project, during and after this initial implementation process of the four phases, is to ensure that the project works continually on a sustainable basis so that the economic, biological and cultural elements of the sustainable development premise are developed with less of a reliance on outside financial or advisory help. The future sustainability of the Mabaso CBC project inevitably relies on the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutional structures that have been set up to run and manage the scheme.



5.3. Mabaso Community Game Reserve: Institutional Structures

The development of appropriate institutions at Mabaso has been an evolutionary process, driven largely by the community leadership (Venter, 2000: 3). Detailed descriptions of the institutions are detailed in Figure 7. These structures vary from the existing traditional tribal councils (authorities) and development committees, to newly formed tourism trusts or non-profit companies' known as Section 21 companies (Venter, 2000: 3).

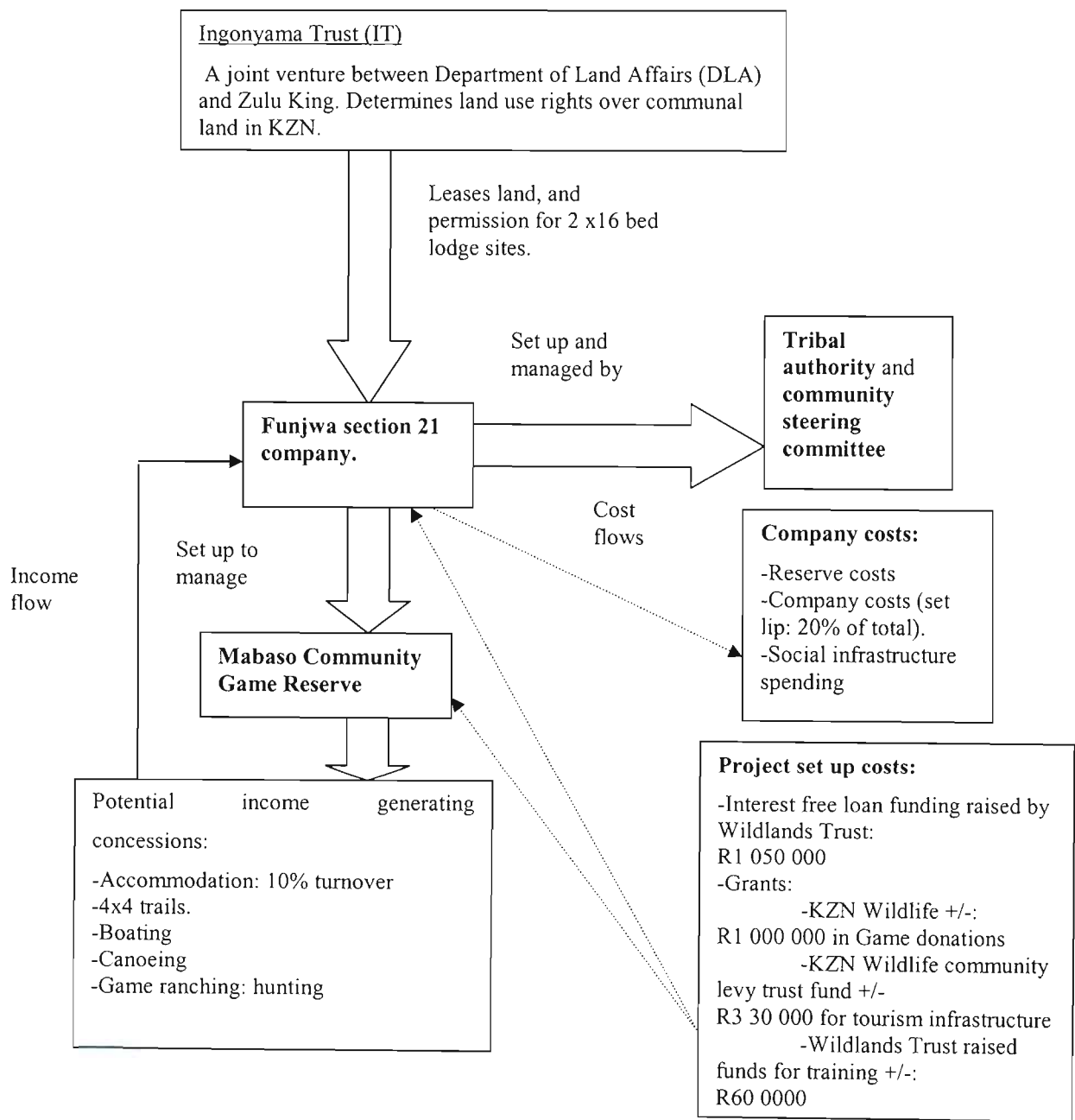


Figure 7: Mabaso Game Reserve Institutional Structure



Tribal authorities in KZN are made up of several community wards with up to four to five hundred people in each ward (CC2, 2004: 2). Every ward within a tribal authority is led and represented by an Nduna (ward chief). The entire jurisdiction of a tribal authority area comes under the custodianship of the overall Inkhosi (tribal chief). The actual tribal authority (or council), which is the representative overall decision-making power of a tribal area, is made up of a tribe's Inkhosi and all the tribe's Ndunas, including some extra community members (CC2, 2004: 2).

The tribal authorities in KZN make up the decision making body that determines all land use rights within the tribal areas through the Ingonyama Trust Act (CC2, 2004: 2). Community members must write an application to their tribal authority if they want permission for any form of livelihood or business proposition based on communal land. The tribal authority will then discuss the application and decide to either accept or decline the proposal (CC2, 2004: 2). If proposals are large or contentious, then community committees are set up to act in an advisory capacity to negotiate and steer proposals in the right direction to avoid conflict and gain acceptance from the tribal council. These committees are made up of three elected members and the Nduna from each of the most affected wards and two representatives of the royal family (representing the Inkhosi) (CC2, 2004: 2). This exemplifies the fact that African 'indigenous structures' can be democratic in so far as traditional authorities consult their subjects whenever critical decisions need to be taken (Ntsebeza, 2003: 80).

Due to the size of the Mabaso Game Reserve proposal and the number of people it was deemed to affect, a steering committee was formed to guide the process. Three members from each of the four most affected wards were elected onto the new steering committee (CC2, 2004: 2). The Mabaso Game Reserve Steering Committee, like all other tribal committees, does not have to take any definitive decisions, as they are there only 'to look at the needs of the reserves, and the necessary requirements to come up with a resolution, that then goes to the tribal authority' (CC2, 2004: 2). The three elected members from each of the most affected wards are responsible for bringing concerns of their wards to the steering committee so that these concerns can be discussed and resolved. The elected members also serve as crucial communication links between the committee and their fellow ward members. The Funjwa Section 21

company, which is a recognised non-profit organisation, has been established to act as a trust fund to look after the project's finances and to manage and run the reserve. Members of both the steering committee and the tribal authority sit on the board of the Funjwa 21 Company.

#### **5.4. MCGR: Community Awareness and Consensus Building Phase**

The implementation of the community awareness and consensus-building phase at Mabaso required strong levels of communication between the Wildlands Trust, the MCGR steering committee and the broader community. Communication to the broader community relied heavily on the communication links between the elected members on the steering committee and the community wards they represented. It was essential that this community awareness and consensus-building phase was most intense with those members of the community that were to be directly affected by any form of accepted proposal. The Wildlands Trust aided the consensus building phase amongst the wider community by funding several capacity building workshops aimed at facilitating the establishment and/or development of appropriate CBC institutions (Venter, 2000: 3). The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) strongly advises that project implementers spend a lot of time and energy on this initial phase in order to ensure the support of the overall community for the initiative (Tourism KZN, 2004: 1).

#### **5.5. Government Support and Approval Phase**

Once it was felt that the Mabaso community had accepted the CBC concept, the next stage involved securing land tenure rights over the designated land for the reserve. In all other South African provinces, apart from KZN, development issues and rights over tenure in communal lands falls under the sole jurisdiction of local government municipalities that own the land. In KZN, prior to 1994, an agreement was made between the former government and the Zulu Kingdom, which restored tenurial rights over government owned communal lands to the Zulu King. The communal leadership structures, that involve the various different tribal authorities and their Inkhosi who act as custodians of the land on behalf of the king, subsequently became:

“Responsible for allocating land for residential, agriculture and grazing purposes. They were not, however, responsible for allocating land for any business activities. Whilst they have a veto right, the state is responsible for approving such proposals and entering into lease based agreements” (Venter, 2000: 7).

This joint venture agreement between the Department of Land Affairs and the Zulu King, known as the Ingonyama Trust Act (ITA), has influence over about 2.7 million hectares of tribal land in KZN and is administered by a board that is chaired by the Zulu Monarch, King Goodwill Zwelethini, or his nominee for the benefit of the community (Govender, 2002: 1).

As the intended Mabaso Game reserve is on ITA communal land it was imperative that the Mabaso Tribal Authority gained tenurial permission from the ITA as an initial step to develop a reserve. Once tenure of the land was secured from the ITA, it was then necessary for the Mabaso Tribal Authority to gain government planning permission from the relevant local authorities for the development of the lodges. The next stage involved setting up a Section 21 company (non-profit organization that acts as a trust fund) to administer and run the reserve.

The whole development and planning permission process needed to be in line with the Development Facilitation Act (DFA). The DFA aims to overcome complex land use planning regulations, and to clarify institutional roles and responsibilities, in an attempt to circumvent the delays inherent in existing regulations, and thus ‘fast track’ development (Rigby and Diab, 2003: 27). The provisions stipulated in the DFA, heavily influence all development proposals submitted to local municipalities by potential developers. Proposals not in line with DFA criteria are rejected. Rigby and Diab (2003: 30) point out that sustainable development is a central theme of the DFA’s general principles for land development. In chapter one of the act the DFA emphasizes that a municipality’s policy, administrative practice and laws should promote sustainable land development at the required scale by promoting the sustained protection of the environment.

As the Ingonyama Trust Act is a joint venture between Land Affairs and the Zulu King, any development applications to local municipalities should subsequently fit the

necessary criteria set out by the DFA in order to satisfy the Department of Land Affairs. This involves, amongst other things, ensuring that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) survey is carried out. Completed application forms for any development proposal in northern KZN, along with their EIA surveys, then have to be submitted to the Department of Traditional and Environmental Affairs in Ulundi. The application is then circulated within the Departments of Agriculture, Public Works and Planning. If all departments are in agreement with the proposal, the developer is issued with a 'permission to occupy' certificate (Tourism KZN, 2004: 1). The Mabaso steering committee approached the Ingonyama Trust for support for their CBC initiative in May 1999. The application was approved by January 2000 (Venter, 2000: 8).

After government permission was obtained, a Section 21 company was set up at Mabaso to oversee and manage the implementation and running of the new reserve. The company, known as the Funjwa Section 21 Company, is a non-profit organization that is legally recognized and assisted by the government. The board of the Funjwa 21 Company, which includes representatives from both the tribal authority and project steering committee, will eventually take over all the responsibilities of the current reserve steering committee (CC1, 2004: 1; CC2, 2004: 3). The idea is that the company will not only be responsible for the day-to-day running of the reserve, but will also act as a trust fund for potential future profits that can then be used to enhance the community through investments in social infrastructure.

A community run Section 21 company devolves decision-making powers directly to the community, and thus avoids the CAMPFIRE scenario where the CBC project was undermined by the fact that Local District Councils (LDC's) were given the authority to first accumulate all the excess revenues from hunting initiatives and then to subsequently distribute the benefits amongst the community. This process would not be a problem if the distribution were conducted fairly. However, the involvement of LDC's added an additional layer of bureaucracy and corruption that meant local communities did not receive their full share of benefits from hunting revenues in good time, which created an atmosphere of mistrust and resentment (Jones and Murphree, 2001: 49).

The existence of the ITA in KZN further reinforces the community's power due to the fact that land tenure rights are in the hands of the tribal authorities, which does a lot to diminish the power base of local municipalities making them very much a subordinate partner in the CBC process. Due to the ITA, the diminished role of local municipalities is a unique situation to KZN. This structure of incorporating traditional authorities into the CBC initiative may not work elsewhere in South Africa. A counter-argument is that in KZN too much power lies in the hands of tribal authorities that often lack transparent democratic processes and gender equity. The issue of tribal authorities will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Funjwa Section 21 company has been helped at Mabaso, in terms of capacity building and skills development of the company's board members, by the GSLWP Simunye (we are one) Community Tourism Association, which is an organization that allows the 'champions' of the different CBC initiatives to meet, exchange ideas and jointly lobby government and non-government organizations for funds, as well as to market community conservation developments to the South African and international tourism fraternity (Venter, 2004: 3). The Simunye Tourism Association is the equivalent organisation to NACOBTA in Namibia, which serves the same purpose of trying to promote CBC initiatives under one umbrella (Jones, 2001: 173).

## **5.6. Partner Identification Phase and Project Construction and Operations Phase**

The partner identification phase and project construction and operations phase of the implementation process, which is linked to capacity building, skills development and job creation at Mabaso, is heavily reliant on private sector investment and training in nature-based tourism projects, which are at present in the early stages of being developed. Three principles were essential for guiding this process (Venter, 2000: 8). Firstly, the construction phase was based on the premise that development models should maximize the realization of small and medium enterprises. Secondly, the community should enter into professional employment contracts with their private sector partners that stipulate a training framework aimed at progressively increasing the proportion of locally employed staff. Thirdly, private sector partnerships were structured around a turnover rental agreement of anywhere between 5-12% of



turnover, which was aimed at guarantying an income flow to the community from tour operations.

The Mabaso Tribal Authority gained leases and permission from the ITA for two sixteen-bed lodge sites on the shores of Lake Sibaya. The tourist potential of both these sites led to a joint venture agreement between the board of the Funjwa Section 21 Company and the Uthungula Resorts and Leisure Company that has 70% shares in Lubombo Hotels (CCF, 2004: 2). Presently, a small eco-friendly tented luxury camp is under construction at one of the sites and is almost complete. One advantage of the ITA leasing system for CBC initiatives in KZN is that the community owns the land, which theoretically strengthens their ability to negotiate with private investors. The Damaraland Camp project in Namibia exemplifies this, as the local community secured a lease agreement from the government for the camp area, which substantially increased the community's negotiating powers with the private investor, enabling the community to demand more in terms of joint ownership over the initiative (Jones, 2001: 172).

The construction and completion of tourist accommodation is the final stage of the ten-year implementation process (Figure 6), but is only the beginning for the sustainable development realization phase that aims to accrue economic and cultural benefits back to the community in return for the biological enhancement of the MCGR. However, as the CAMPFIRE example (Chapter 3) illustrated, the conservation return is not guaranteed as the local community may decide that the economic incentives of investing any potential revenues earned from nature-based tourism may be better spent on biologically unsustainable practices such as livestock keeping. It is imperative, therefore, that the economic incentives offered for conservation through tourism is complimented by educational efforts to inform the community of the importance of conservation in order to ensure the sustainable survival of resources. KZN Wildlife is making efforts to do this by training up community conservation officers with the specific role of educating communities about the importance of conservation (CC3, 2004: 2).

The next section discusses: the key measures taken by the Mabaso project implementers in trying to avoid negative impacts on rural livelihood strategies as a



result of the game reserve; what the major challenges were during the implementation process; and what steps have been put in place so far to ensure the sustainability of the project.

#### **5.7.1. Barriers to Implementation and Sustainability**

Community acceptance and support for the CBC concept at Mabaso was one of the hardest challenges faced by the project implementers and still is to this day. Despite much effort to convey the CBC conceptual message to the community through numerous meetings and workshops the project has encountered several instances of physical resentment towards the reserve over the past few years, as demonstrated by the continued vandalism of the reserve's fences. This is partly due to the fact that South Africa's historical 'fortress conservation' approach has instilled high levels of suspicion, hostility and skepticism within rural communities towards conservation issues (Venter, 2000: 8). Consequently, many rural people feel that CBC initiatives are a form of land grab in the guise of conservation with promises of economic benefits. High levels of suspicion subsequently culminate in acts such as vandalism of the fences that undermine the achievement of the biological and economic goals of the sustainable development model (Figure 1). It is imperative, therefore, that economic benefits from CBC approaches accrue relatively quickly back to the Mabaso community in the form of jobs and funds generated for social infrastructure development. This must happen in order to reassure the community that they are the targeted beneficiaries of the conservation efforts.

#### **5.7.2. Political Tension as a Barrier to Implementation**

An additional reason as to why the CBC implementation process was undermined at Mabaso is because of originally unforeseen political tensions between the Mabaso and the neighbouring Mbila communities. Historically, the tension between the Mabaso and Mbila tribes was generated as a result of conflicting views over their tribal boundaries when the reserve was first implemented. Several Mbila households had to move off land designated for the new game reserve as it came under control of the Mabaso Tribal Authority. A legal battle between the two tribes ensued for more than two years as the Mbila's claimed they were being forcibly removed, violently

assaulted and prevented from accessing their resources. They also laid attempted murder charges against the Mabaso chief, Justice Nxumalo (SABC NEWS, 2003: 1). The Mabaso tribe won the court case after it emerged, during cross-examination of the Mbila Chief and others, that none of the allegations were true (Moneyweb KZN, 2003). Despite a court injunction allowing the CBC initiative to go ahead at Mabaso, as well as the lawful recognition of the tribal boundaries, vandalism against the fences has continued.

There is a possibility that unforeseen political undercurrents set to destabilise the tribal authority structure is fueling the continued vandalism of the fences (CC1, 2004: 2). The African National Congress (ANC) would ideally like to see the powers of tribal authorities diminished so that democratically elected government municipalities can take charge of all major decision making processes (Ntsebeza, 2003: 56). A mechanism for relocating control of tenure to individuals is the new Communal Land Rights Bill (CLRb), put forward by the ANC, which aims to give individuals and groups private tenure over formerly government owned communal lands. This bill effectively undermines the Tribal Authority structures (CC1, 2004: 2). The most recent published draft of the CLRb 'is almost less overtly pro-chief than earlier versions, with a maximum of 25% of positions on local administrative bodies to be occupied by traditional leaders, in an *ex-officio* capacity' (Cousins, 2002: 2). These issues are politically very contentious and sensitive in KwaZulu-Natal due to the fact that the CLRb is likely to undermine the ITA, despite promises by the ANC that the ITA will remain intact. The ANC's major opposition in KZN, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), additionally supports the ITA and traditional structures, which are seen as major factors uniting the Zulu Kingdom that forms the IFP's major support base (Ntsebeza, 2003: 72).

It can be argued that the current conflict between the Mabaso and Mbila communities comes down to politics, as the Mabaso are apparently predominantly influenced by the IFP and the Mbila are mainly supporters of the ANC (CC1, 2004: 2). It is thought that outsiders have put pressure on the Mbila community to undermine the Mabaso community conservation initiative in order to show that communal property structures do not work effectively (CC1, 2004: 2). The Mbila community has subsequently attempted to portray the Mabaso Inkhosi as being a 'warlord' (CC1, 2004: 1) as

evidenced by the failed attempted murder charges (Moneyweb KZN, 2003). It needs to be stated as a weakness of this study, however, that more research would need to be done, by interviewing members of the Mbila tribe, in order to ascertain whether the motives behind the vandalism of the fences was entirely politically motivated.

In terms of resolving the Mabaso and Mbila conflict, the Wildlands Trust is considering putting a funding condition forward to the Mabaso Funjwa Section 21 board, which will suggest that the Mbila are shareholders in the lodge development plans, thus giving them an economic incentive to help the new reserve succeed (CC1, 2004: 3). This supports Dzingarai's (2003, 445) argument, based on studies done on Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE program in Binga District near Lake Kariba, that the monopoly on benefits held by the 'producer communities', those communities that share territory with and benefit from wildlife and CBC initiatives, serve to antagonize non-members and, in some cases, encourages them to seek the destruction of what they come to regard as costly wildlife management techniques. In effect, the exclusion of outside social groups makes these groups hostile to the management initiative and its adherents, which engenders animosity towards wildlife (Dzingarai, 2003: 446). Dzingarai suggests that a broader inclusion is necessary by spreading the benefits from CBC initiatives to outsiders and not just the 'core group' (Dzingarai, 2003: 458). The proposal for sharing benefits with the Mbila tribe has presently not been put to the two communities and may be too much of a bitter pill to swallow for the Mabaso leadership given the bad history between the two tribes.

The problem between the Mabaso and Mbila communities may not simply be just down to political preference; as contested borders between two communities supporting the same political party may also just as easily occur. The main lesson learnt from the Mabaso versus Mbila conflict, however, has been the need to determine the political preference of areas beforehand, and what the implications of competing political outlooks mean for the implementation process of CBC initiatives in the future. For example, if the philosophy of the CLRB, which is supported by the ANC and others, is accepted in parliament, then it is likely to have a negative impact on CBC initiatives in the future, as it would be harder to consolidate large areas of individually owned land for conservation purposes.

### **5.7.3. Communal versus Individual Tenure as a Barrier to Implementation**

It is argued that the ambitious attempt by the CLRB to replace indigenous tenure systems with western style property rights, that have proved effective vehicles of economic development in societies organized around market principles, will be inappropriate and ineffective in the African context for the following reasons:

“African systems of land tenure are based on the principle that every one within the community of origin has rights to land, but that individual rights are balanced against their obligations to the social group. Rights are thus shared and relative. Systems tend to be inclusive, not exclusive, and rights and obligations are held at a number of levels of social organization, from the neighbourhood to the village to the larger community. Rights in community-based land tenure systems can be very secure, and ensure that access to land is available as a vital safety net for the poor. The key to their resilience in Africa is people’s preference for socially regulated access to resources” (Cousins, 2002: 3).

Cultural structures for land tenure and decision-making, through the inclusion of the tribal authority, have been incorporated into the Mabaso CBC initiative. The inclusion of local leadership satisfies the CBC principle (Table 1) of acknowledging local structures and ensuring local leadership fully support the CBC initiative (DEAT: 2003: 21). There is a danger that an elite leadership group may be created, which can be avoided if rights and duties are spread out and clearly defined in order to broaden the leadership role and even out power (DEAT, 2003: 46). In the South African context, the inclusion of tribal structures has both positive and negative effects. The fact that cultural institutions are being used to facilitate and manage the CBC initiative is a positive feature in terms of cultural enhancement, as it augments traditional leadership structures that are coming under increasing pressure to dismantle and adopt westernized approaches to governance. One perspective of traditional structures of governance is that these have been around for hundreds of years and have proven to work relatively efficiently and equitably in terms of the community’s access to resources on a sustainable basis. Anstey and De Sousa’s (2001) study in Mozambique’s Chimanimani district supports this perspective, as their findings found traditional institutions to be strong, efficient and requiring lower inputs than western techniques of conservation. It has been suggested that there is value in African concepts of power as opposed to a western-style liberal democracy:



“Various elements of leadership had their roots in different traditions, sectors of population, and localities. That was why power, as domination, did not exist there. Rather it was plurality of authority stemming from the traditions of different segments of society, which ensured that the whole population of a particular area shared ideas, and practices related to public arrangements, and recognized the leaders who in turn respected the rules and accepted the influence of the population on public affairs” (Skalnik, 1996: 111 in Ntsebeza, 2003: 59).

As a result, traditional structures still command huge amounts of respect from the community, and therefore are a necessity in terms of consolidating communities cooperation to work together towards a given set goal.

#### **5.7.4. Democracy and Gender Inequality as Barriers to implementation.**

The counter-arguments to utilizing traditional structures of leadership are that they tend to be non-democratic and gender inequitable in nature. The tribal authority at Mabaso is very much ‘influenced by the Inkhosi, which means there is rarely a dissenting voice against him’ (CC1, 2004: 2). The relative success of a CBC initiative can therefore be dependent on the dedication, support and enlightenment of the tribal authority leadership. There is supporting evidence that suggests tribal structures are losing support in certain areas. For example in 1995 the IFP called for a boycott of local government elections in retaliation for the ANC’s move to establish local municipalities in tribal authority areas. The boycott was not supported by the population, casting suspicion on the supposed popularity of traditional authorities (Ntsebeza, 2003: 75).

The tribal structure does, however, incorporate certain democratic principles. For example, setting up a committee for large and controversial proposals involves three members from each affected ward being voted onto a committee to discuss the particular proposal that affects them. This is a relatively transparent process as the steering committee for the Mabaso Reserve is technically open to any member of the community. To avoid congestion at meetings, however, the main role of the elected ward members is to go back to their wards to discuss the issues raised at steering committee meetings with their fellow ward members (CC2, 2004: 2). Regular *imbisos*

(meeting) then take place at the respective affected wards to discuss their representative's stance at the next steering committee meeting (CC2, 2004: 2).

At the Mabaso Steering Committee meeting held at the Mabaso Tribal Court house, shown in plate 1 (Appendix B), on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2004 there were thirteen people present. Four of the thirteen members were from outside the community, with two representing the Wildlands Trust, one each from KZN Wildlife and the local municipality. Out of the remaining nine people representing the community, three were women, making a ratio of one woman to two men on the committee from the local community (CCF, 2004: 3). This demonstrates that women are eligible to be voted onto traditional committees and take positions of some authority within the community structures. However, more needs to be done to encourage the whole tribal process to become more gender equitable. There are signs that the present Inkhosi Nxumalo at Mabaso is taking the initiative on this issue, as at a recent tribal authority meeting he insisted that more women and youth should be voted onto tribal committees and be represented on the tribal authority (CC2, 2004: 2). The shift to stronger participation from women and youth may be the result of tribal authorities recognizing the importance donor funding agencies attach to gender equity (CC4, 2004: 2). The Wildlands trust has set in place a funding condition that stipulates that there should be an equal division of labour between men and women in all jobs created by the initiative in order to further enhance gender equity in the CBC initiative (CCF, 2004: 3). The problem with funding conditions is that they can be seen as a dictatorial device by outsiders, which risks diminishing the community's sense of control and ownership over the project, thus weakening the social element of the sustainable development model.

#### **5.7.5. Communication as a Barrier to Implementation**

Communication, or the lack of it, has been cited at Mabaso as one of the most crucial issues that has slowed and undermined the whole project process. Tribal committees are designed to filter information through to the entire community where major issues are then discussed at imbisos. At Mabaso it is felt that this has not been happening properly (CC2, 2004: 3). This has led to a major breakdown in communication between the steering committee of the game reserve and the broader community,



which has led to rising levels of mistrust and suspicion (CC2, 2004: 3). A prominent member of the Mabaso Steering Committee stated that:

“The biggest problem is information to the community. The only way of solving this problem is by restructuring the committee and getting capable people to do the work by insuring that they pass information back to the wards they represent. The people who cut fences have not been well informed by their representatives” (CC2, 2004: 3).

The breakdown in communication at Mabaso, which is a fundamental reason as to why the whole CBC process is often so slow in getting off the ground, is exacerbated by the fact that there is a high absenteeism rate of steering committee members attending meetings, which slows the process down as it becomes harder to co-ordinate the decision making process, and means vital information is often not transferred back to the affected wards (CCF, 2004: 3). Transport was given as the major reason as to why members of the steering committee could often not attend (CCF, 2004: 3). In rural areas, such as Mabaso, it is recognised that the opportunity cost of time given up for steering committee meetings is often very high in terms of labour hours that could be spent securing their livelihood strategies elsewhere, and which may be a further cause for the high absenteeism rate. Absenteeism may also simply be attributable to apathy and lack of commitment by community members.

In order to speed up the CBC process, communication between stakeholders needs to be enhanced. For this to happen, project implementers may need to think about budgeting for transportation costs of steering committee members. Additionally, economic incentives, such as a meeting attendance wage, to lower the opportunity costs of attending meetings and to entice committee members to come to the meetings, could be possible ways around the collapse in traditional tribal authority communication procedures that seem to be occurring at Mabaso. The cost of doing this would obviously have to be offset with the potential benefits of speeding up the communication processes and enhancing the level of trust amongst the community. The disadvantage, however, of providing incentives is that people may attend simply to get some income. There is also space for corruption as people may hold meetings, when there is no need to have a meeting, in order to get paid.

### **5.7.6. Government Bureaucracy as a Barrier to Implementation**

Government bureaucracy presented the Mabaso Steering Committee with a major challenge in the early stages of the Mabaso project implementation process. It took approximately two and a half years to obtain the necessary development permission from the various different government departments (CC1, 2004: 2-3). Venter (2000: 7) points out that:

“In South Africa this procedure is proving to be a cumbersome and time-consuming process.... There are currently over 90 different pieces of legislation, which affect this process, resulting in substantial overlap between different time delays as proposals are shuttled between different departments. The government is currently attempting to streamline the process, with limited success.”

The slow rate of government functioning is characteristic of CBC projects in other parts of South Africa. A study carried out by Viljoen and Naicker (2000: 140) on the Mavhaluni bush camp, a joint-venture agreement between the local community and a private investor in South Africa's Northern Province, found that finalizing the permission to occupy (PTO) certificates was a major stumbling block to tourist development on communal land, as the developers were not prepared to invest capital in fixed infrastructure without having security of tenure. This delayed the development considerably until a final PTO was issued.

One of the most important guidelines to dealing with government bureaucracy and to speed up future projects, as a result of the Mabaso experience, is the need to develop a relationship with officials who take decisions (CC1, 2004:4). It is useful for the project administrators to establish and understand government criteria and what it is the government needs to see being achieved (CC1, 2004: 4). By doing this, project implementers will be able to act accordingly, in the initial stages, to meet government department needs, and subsequently speed up the implementation process when it comes to dealing with the different departments.

### **5.7.7. Donor Dependence as a Barrier to Implementation**

The long-term sustainability of the Mabaso project will be achieved when income generation and management capabilities are not reliant on external support from the Wildlands Trust and KZN Wildlife. The presence of the Wildlands Trust, as a funding and advisory organisation, has been crucial to the survival of the Mabaso project thus far. An over-reliance by the Mabaso Community was emphasised by the collapse of the CBC process when the Wildlands Trust started to withdraw (CC1, 2004: 3). The Trust brings a lot of influence to the table in the form of funders, future investors, as well as KZN Wildlife, and without this back-bone the process would essentially fail (CC1, 2004: 3). While the presence of outside support is a key principle of the CBC concept (Table 1) there is a danger that the CBC initiative may become over-reliant on outside expertise.

In terms of the Mabaso community taking stronger managerial responsibility for the reserve, it has been suggested that the steering committee meet in the middle of every month without non-community members, and then again at the end of each month with the representatives from the Wildlands Trust and KZN Wildlife (CCF, 2004: 3). The aim of this exercise would theoretically mean that more decisions concerning the reserve would be arrived at without the influence of the outside experts. This would be a crucial step to reduce the reliance of the community on outsiders for advice. The consequent build up of their confidence in decision making would enhance their sense of ownership over the CBC initiative, making the whole process more culturally and socially sustainable in the long term. This would also potentially avoid the negative effect of a sudden and immediate withdrawal of external support.

Complete ownership of any CBC initiative needs to ensure that the rules and regulations of the projects are determined and enforced by the community themselves (Table 1). If it is felt that outsiders implement the rules of the new reserve, as is the case with fortress conservation methods, then resentment towards CBC initiatives is likely to build up as a result. At Mabaso:

“One key issue that concerned the community was the inclusion of two wetlands areas in the conservation area. These areas were farmed extensively

for subsistence purposes and the introduction of game, particularly dangerous game, would impact on their farming operations and the farmers' access to the area. Following a series of community meetings, the community conservation area's boundaries were redefined to exclude these wetland areas" (Venter, 2000: 5).

The fact that it was decided by the Mabaso community not to fence around the arable plots of land on the lake front is a positive example of the community taking charge of the process and deciding exactly how they want the reserve to evolve and function. It also exemplifies the important requirement of the conservation effort not to detract from rural livelihood strategies, which in this instance involved fertile land on the lakeshore. The Steering Committee decided that no farming would subsequently be allowed within the reserve perimeter. The harvesting of *Ilala* leaves, used for weaving, still continues within the reserve, to allow for sustainable livelihood strategies. However, the cutting of *Ilala* plants for wine has been banned from within the reserve, as in order to get the wine, collectors need to tap into the roots, which eventually kills the plant (CC1, 2004: 3). In this case a balance has been achieved between economic and conservation goals of the sustainable development model.

Seven game guards have so far been appointed to patrol the reserve and are accountable to and paid by the Funjwa Section 21 board. The rules and jurisdiction of the reserve have subsequently been recognised by the police and several convictions have already occurred (CC2, 2004: 3), satisfying Ostrom's criteria for sustaining common property institutions (Table 2). A further positive decision in relation to the community management of the reserve was recently taken by the steering committee in officially appointing a manager of the reserve, and clearly stating that he is responsible for the security of the reserve (CCF, 2004: 4). This is an important step in terms of clearly defining people's job descriptions and spreading responsibility in order to give people their deserved status in the roles they play, as well as creating individuals who ultimately can be held accountable for the day to day management of the reserve.



### **5.8.1. MCGR: Towards Economic Sustainability**

As communal land is held 'in trust' by the Zulu King in KZN, or the Minister of Land Affairs in other parts of South Africa, neither individuals nor communities are able to offer trust land as security for loans from financial institutions (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 136). For this reason, the long-term financial sustainability of the Mabaso project depends on the reserve's ability to generate income from private investment in tourism ventures. The major incentives for any investors in the Mabaso area are its unique site and scenery, as well as its close proximity to the greater St Lucia Wetlands Park (GSLWP), which is a growing tourism destination (CC1, 2004: 3). At present the steering committee is identifying and experimenting with various different tourism activity concessions, other than accommodation, that they could potentially outsource to private companies. At Mabaso, concessions for boat rides, canoeing, 4x4 trails, horse riding and hunting have been considered and in some instances tested. The Mabaso game reserve's close proximity with Sodwana Bay, South Africa's premier diving destination, is potentially very advantageous in terms of the reserve's ability to attract visitors as an alternative day trip outing for divers and their families when they are not diving (CCF, 2004: 3). It is hoped that once the two lodges are established, and regular visitors start coming both for long term visits and day trips, then a market for local produce such as vegetables and traditional crafts will be established, which will also directly enhance local peoples livelihood strategies (CC2, 2004: 3). Local produce and traditional crafts can provide supplemental income in CBC projects. For example women community members benefited from selling locally grown produce and locally made traditional crafts within the Vulamehlo Handicraft Project in the Spioenkop Nature Reserve (Kruger and Verster, 2001: 245).

The Mabaso community needs to outsource the identified concessions to private firms, as the community is reliant on these firms to provide the revenue to market the area and provide the necessary funds for training purposes. A percentage of the revenues generated by the various concessions, which will be determined through negotiations between the Funjwa Section 21 board and the firm interested in the concession, will then go back into the Funjwa Section 21 Company that will look after the funds on behalf of the overall community. It has been agreed so far, with the Lubombo Tours and Safaris Company that 10% of the potential gross turnover

generated by the accommodation will go to the Funjwa Section 21 Company (CC1, 2004: 1).

The issue of consolidating the joint venture agreement between the Funjwa board and Lubombo Tours and Safaris, by finalizing the deal and providing an ultimatum of a two year contract, was brought up at the January 2004 steering committee meeting by the Wildlands Trust representative (CCF, 2004: 3). It was recognised that although Lubombo tours had done a lot for the reserve so far, it was felt that they had missed out on a large income generating opportunity over the recent festive season by not having their cruise boat in operation or attracting any visitors for that duration (CCF, 2004: 3). The community is reliant on the private firm for investment, marketing, job creation and training purposes; however, the community also needs the private investor to fulfill its end of the bargain by filling beds with visitors and generating income for the community. If this does not happen, then it is up to the community to get firm and make ultimatums to achieve the results it wants to see. One suggested ultimatum was to put some of the concessions, such as the boat rides and canoeing, up for tender in the New Year so that other potential private operators can compete for the concessions. This emphasises the importance of the community needing to take charge of the situation and setting the conditions necessary for ensuring the private operators perform to their maximum capacities by offering them enough incentives to want to invest in the area, whilst at the same time confirming the terms and conditions in order to put the investors under a bit of pressure to perform within realistic time frames.

The eventual goal of the Mabaso CBC project is to ensure that, through the tourist concessions on offer; enough income will be generated by the reserve for the Funjwa Section 21 Company to take over the complete running of the project without outside financial help. The company will be responsible for re-investing money in the reserve to sustain and improve its infrastructure, such as roads, fencing and animal stocks. A 20% lid on company cost expenditure from the income generated by the reserve will be set in place to prevent corruption and over spending (CC1, 2004: 2).

The hope is that the reserve will generate enough income to exceed the running costs of the reserve so as to become non-reliant on donor funding and which will enable the



Funjwa board to start accumulating money for social infrastructure spending within the community. Economic growth directed at community development is an important principle of sustainable development (Table 1). As the project has not reached this stage at present, the exact way of deciding how any excess funds should be spent within the community has not been officially determined. Conflicting ways of distributing any excess income have been put forward. One procedure is to rely on traditional structures, whereby the board of the Funjwa Section 21 Company will have to report to the tribal authority, which will then decide how the money will be spent. This process works on the premise that the needs of the tribe are known by the tribal authority as a result of the representation of each ward by their Ndunas who sit on the tribal council (CC2, 2004: 2). This is not a very transparent or democratic process, and subsequently could lead to the creation of distrust amongst the community.

The second procedure, of how to distribute the benefits is to organise a large public gathering, whereby a shortlist of wanted investment suggestions from those gathered will be put forward. A row voting system, involving people lining up behind the investment choice they would most like to see implemented first, could possibly be introduced (CC1, 2004: 4). The advantage of this is that the process is completely transparent for everyone to see. It could, however, be a long drawn out process in terms of agreeing on the initial short list. There is also no anonymity that could lead to bullying and repercussions. Intimidation could force people to stand in rows most wanted by power yielding members of the community especially as there is still immense respect for indunas in rural parts of KZN.

#### **5.8.2. MCGR: Towards Sustainable Livelihood Strategies**

Both proposals for distributing excess income generated by the reserve agree that in order to encourage equity throughout the entire community, the wider Mabaso community and not just those wards most affected by the reserve should also benefit from social infrastructural investments. The theory suggests, however, that those people most affected by the wards should ultimately see quick economic benefits accrue back to them in the early stages in order to secure their support for the initiative and ensure that their sustainable livelihood strategies (Table 1 and Figure 2)

are not compromised but enhanced by the reserve through the creation of job opportunities.

The Mabaso project has achieved this in several ways during the four implementation phases. Firstly, the Funjwa board identified the number of people it could employ in the initial stages as game guards and fence builders within its given budget. People from the most affected wards were then given preference when it came to availability of these job opportunities (CC2, 2004: 2). Each affected ward decided who would get the jobs through a simple but transparent process of publicly picking names out of a hat (CC2, 2004: 2). As KwaMboma was deemed the most affected ward of all, four out of the seven game guards came from this ward. Individuals from each of the other three most affected wards made up the remainder (CC2, 2004: 2).

Secondly, it has been proposed that households living near the reserve should be offered shares in the Funjwa 21 Company in return for their labour in maintaining the fences and roads (CC1, 2004: 4). This will offer those households direct economic incentives, in the form of dividends for their labour, which will hopefully further encourage their support for the success and profitability of the reserve. The more profitable the reserve is, then the more dividends these households will receive. So it is in their interest to see the reserve succeed.

Thirdly, the livelihood strategies of women in the Mabaso area could be enhanced by a proposal, put forward by the reserve's Steering Committee, which involves the sustainable harvesting of Ilala (*Hyphaene Coriacea*) leaves. Ilala leaves are used for weaving mats, baskets and in the production of brooms, as illustrated in Plate 2 (Appendix B). Currently individuals collect Ilala leaves and sell them to businessmen from Durban for R6 per bundle (CCF, 2004: 2). Bundles of Ilala subsequently fetch up to R15 in Durban. It has therefore been proposed that the Funjwa Section 21 board buys the Ilala bundles from the women for R10 and then store the leaves at the Mabaso Game reserve entrance where there is a small secure warehouse that was donated to the Funjwa board by the roads department (Plate 3: Appendix B). The board will make arrangements with a local transport company to then transport and sell the Ilala in Durban. This way the Ilala pickers will get R4 extra per bundle, and the Funjwa board will generate profits from selling the Ilala that will then be ploughed

back into maintaining the reserve (CCF, 2004: 2). The process is still in the cost-benefit analysis stage. Women present at the January 2004 steering committee meeting raised issues of concern about whether they would get paid for the Ilala up front upon delivery. Once again, careful consideration of local needs and desires will have to be considered through participatory processes before any final decisions are made. However, this is a good example of an initiative designed to enhance rural peoples' livelihoods, generate a little more income for the financial sustainability of the reserve and diversify income generation away from an over-reliance on tourism.

### **5.9. Summary**

The Mabaso Game Reserve CBC initiative has proven to be an exceptionally large learning curve for every one involved and emphasises the long-term time frames necessary to see CBC initiatives through to fruition. Issues of inter-tribal political factions, democracy, gender inequality, communication weaknesses, government bureaucracy, an over-reliance on outside help for both financial and advisory help, as well as a lack of private sector commitment to achieving their end of the bargain by attracting tourists and filling bed spaces, have undermined the Mabaso project implementation process. Solutions such as including the Mbila clan in the future benefit sharing initiatives, learning how government works in terms of their criteria and who best to deal with, providing transport or incentives for steering committee members to attend meetings, encouraging the reserve's chosen community members to take on more of a role in the decision making process and setting strict ultimatums to the private sector enterprises through contracts to deliver the goods, have all been suggested as ways of overcoming the respective problems encountered by the project implementers.

The next chapter provides a case study analysis of the Usuthu Gorge CBC initiative, which exemplifies how the Wildlands Trust who is involved in both projects, has been able to learn from the MCGR to enhance and ease the Usuthu project.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Usuthu Gorge Conservation Area (UGCCA): Project Analysis**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter looks at the challenges and successes faced by the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (UGCCA) initiative in the initial implementation phase, and offers several comparisons to the Mabaso Community Game Reserve (MCGR) project analysed in Chapter Five. It begins with a historical over view of the UGCCA and an outline of the evolving institutional structures. As the UGCCA project has not currently completed the four-phase implementation process identified for CBC initiatives (Chapter Four), it is not possible to give a holistic view of all the challenges faced by the project as it enters into each new phase. Instead this case study analyses the early implementation processes of the UGCCA initiative to establish how the project has enhanced the social, economic and livelihood strategies of the Mathenjwa people living in the area, which should in turn induce strong positive attitudes and actions to satisfy the conservation goals of the sustainable development model (Figure 1).

#### **6.2. UGCCA: Historical Overview**

The UGCCA, situated on the South African border with Mozambique, Swaziland and located between the Lubombo Hills in the West and the Ndumu Game Reserve in the East, was first conceived in the early 1990s when the local Mathenjwa tribe was awarded a land restitution claim over the area. Members from the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority subsequently became interested in the notion of trying to develop the area through conservation and tourism initiatives (CC4, 2004: 1). The tribal authority negotiated with their communities to release approximately 6 160 hectares of land for the purpose of the reserve (IES, 2000: 1). The Wildlands Trust was then approached to help initiate the CBC proposal.

From a conservation perspective, the idea of converting the Usuthu Gorge area into a reserve was very appealing to the Wildlands Trust because it fitted in with the development of the Lubombo Trans-Frontier Conservation Area. The longer term vision of the development includes consolidating the Usuthu Gorge, Ndumo Game Reserve, a portion of the Mbangweni corridor and the Tembe Elephant Park into one large continuous conservation area of up to 60 000 ha in size (Peace Parks Foundation, 2002: 7). The creation of such a large area under protection strengthens the biological component of the sustainable development model. The establishment of corridors linking un-spoilt areas of wilderness and the expansion of wild areas, as well as securing the survival of wild lands for future generations is also a key principle for an effective CBC initiative to be deemed a success through the maintenance and enhancement of natural resources of an area (DEAT, 2003: 21).

### **6.3. UGCCA: Institutional Structures**

The Usuthu Gorge project was initiated two years later than Mabaso and is therefore behind in terms of implementation and development (CC1, 2004: 3). The Wildlands Trust has benefited greatly from the invaluable lessons learnt from the Mabaso experience, as a result it can bring new knowledge to the more recent project, and is better able to pre-empt potential problems (CC4, 2004: 2). Consequently there are subtle differences between the institutional structures, as well as implementation processes, that have been adopted at Usuthu in comparison to the Mabaso process.

The institutional structures at Usuthu are almost identical to the ones outlined for Mabaso (Figure 7), except that a Section 21 Company has not yet been formed and no definite concessions have been decided on. In terms of funding, the Wildlands Trust has raised and donated an initial R900 000 interest free loan to finance the Usuthu project, as well as to cover the estimated R10 per hectare management fee per annum necessary to run the project (CCF, 2004: 1). In addition to this, the Trust has also donated R300 000 for the training of guides and game guards. The KZN Wildlife department has also donated a population of game animals in order to increase the viability of the reserve. At present, there is also a funding proposal in place with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Poverty Relief Fund for R6 million to be used in the development of the reserve's infrastructure and tourism



initiatives (CC4, 2004: 2). These expenditure figures illustrate the expensive initial costs of setting up CBC initiatives and the reliance on the donor agencies to support the concept.

The Usambaras project in Tanzania found that it was essential for the long-term sustainability of CBC initiatives to have technical expertise focused on one project throughout the entire implementation process (Adams, 2001, 245). The UGCCA Steering Committee, which makes it unique from Mabaso, has a designated project manager, namely Sue McClintock from the Wildlands Trust, whose job it is to provide the project with technical expertise and give the initiative direction and momentum. The rest of the Usuthu steering committee is made up of representatives from four of the most affected wards in the area, including the respective Nduna's of these wards and representatives from KZN Wildlife (CC3, 2004: 1).

#### **6.4. UGCCA: Project Implementation Successes and Challenges**

The implementation process at UGCCA appears to have experienced several advantages over the Mabaso initiative. Firstly, the project coordinator, the Wildlands Trust, has experience from the Mabaso initiative and can therefore predict and counter certain obstacles. As such, the Wildlands Trust has been able to pre-empt a lot of potential problems at the Usuthu Gorge project site, examples of which are highlighted later. Secondly, there are no conflicting political undercurrents within and between the Mathenjwa community and their neighbours, the Tembe Tribal Authority. The Tembe Tribal authority has bought into a CBC joint-venture initiative of its own, involving the Tembe Elephant Park. Thirdly, the legal parameters and property rights of the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority are clearly identified as a result of the recently settled land restitution claim. This is important as limited security of land tenure often acts as a deterrent to investment by private sector developers who place a premium on secure land tenure arrangements (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 136). Clearly defined property rights therefore go a long way to ensuring that CBC initiatives will not be disrupted by any land disputes in the future. The MCGR is an example of an initiative that experienced huge set backs as a result of unclear property rights, as well as political differences, which led to the disruption of the reserve's fences and unnerved potential private investors. Fourthly, the Wildlands Trust has



realized the need for a specific project manager of the UGCCA project whose focus is purely project specific and who is a member of the UGCCA Steering Committee (CC4, 2004: 1). This specific role ensures the full attention and long-term commitment to the project, on an advisory basis, of a skilled professional to provide direction for the initiative, and is one of the many initiatives to reduce the chance of the project failing. This was also a co-requisite identified from the experience of the East Usambaras Agricultural Development and Environmental Conservation Project in Tanzania (Adams, 2001: 345).

Despite the advantages the Usuthu Gorge project has experienced so far, there have also been a number of challenges in the implementation process. Ironically one of these challenges has come from the KZN Wildlife officer in charge of the Ndumu Game Reserve who, apparently adopting the fortress conservation school of thought, was skeptical about opening the small section of Ndumu Reserve fence for the creation of the link corridor with the UGCCA (CC3, 2004: 2). The Wildlands Trust and Usuthu Steering Committee apparently had to approach his superiors to gain permission for the small section of fence to be dropped. This case exemplifies that efforts to promote the CBC concept must not just focus on the local communities involved. Fortress conservation is still very prevalent, which means attention must also be placed on trying to convert the game guard from wielding a stick to using a carrot, or at least a combination of using both a carrot and a stick.

Communication between the steering committee and the broader community was cited as a major problem slowing down the implementation process at the UGCCA, as was the case in the Mabaso Game Reserve Project. The Wildlands Trust is currently suggesting that in order to overcome this problem, a full-time field worker should be employed to play an interim role between the Usuthu Steering Committee and the broader community (CC4, 2004: 3). It is important that any communication link set up with the broader community conveys the right messages. Realistic outcomes and decisions of the project coordinators should be conveyed in a truthful manner in order to avoid raising expectations (CC3, 2004: 2). Communication links also have to work as a two way process, and it is therefore important that the steering committee engages with what the community wants as the CBC process evolves (CC3, 2004: 2). A fieldworker with the specific aim of acting as a communication bridge between the

Steering Committee and the community could help ensure that the necessary communication requirements are achieved to make the whole CBC process run more effectively. It is also very important in addition to this to ensure that accurate records of what has been said and by whom are kept to minimize disputes further down the line.

The UGCCA steering committee faces the same issues of gender inequality and undemocratic principles that the Mabaso initiative encountered when incorporating tribal authority structures into the management organization of the project. The chairman of the UGCCA steering committee is a nominee of the Mathenjwa Inkhosi. This differs from the Mabaso Community Game Reserve where the Inkhosi is the actual chairman of the steering committee (CC1, 2004: 2). The nominated chairman of the UGCCA steering committee has apparently not attended many meetings (CC4, 2004: 3). His absence may undermine the legitimacy of any decisions that are made by the remainder of the committee. According to one committee member, the absence of the nominee does, however, allow the remaining committee members to apparently function under a less hierarchal structure when the chairman is not present, and seems to make the decision making process more democratic and open, which has meant members are less intimidated to put their real views across (CC4, 2004: 3). The possible reasons for the chairman's absence at these meetings is not very clear and further research would need to be carried out to ascertain why. More research, by interviewing a broader sample of steering committee members, would also have to be conducted to determine whether meetings are actually more open and democratic without the appointed chairman.

This chapter now moves on to illustrate some of the similarities and differences between the UGCCA and the MCGR experiences. It also emphasises how the UGCCA initiative has benefited from the knowledge gained from the MCGR, and what processes have been implemented to make the project more socially and economically sustainable in order for the CBC project to achieve its conservation aims.

## **6.5. UGCCA: Toward Social Sustainability**

Like the MCGR, the issue of gaining community trust was a long drawn out process at the UGCCA. Community members accepted the concept of CBC in principle, but were very cautious to act due to the fact that the Mathenjwa Authority straddles the edge of the Ndumu Reserve and is near to the Tembe Elephant Park, which both epitomize fortress conservation practices with limited community involvement and no access to non-paying members of the community (CC3, 2004: 1). After a long series of meetings and discussions with the community, The Wildlands Trust was pivotal in ensuring that the community acted on its rhetoric and took the initiative to implement a CBC scheme at Usuthu Gorge. This was physically demonstrated at one particular meeting, when the CEO of the Wildlands Trust actually got up and jumped off a table, demonstrating the fact that simply talking about the concept was not going to achieve beneficial physical results for the community without taking a significant leap into action (CC3, 2004: 1).

Due to the community's hesitation and lack of trust, it became imperative for the project implementers to assure the community that they owned the initiative right from the start and that, as a result of the reserve, there would not be a negative impact on their lives. As a trust building initiative, and to ensure the community that the fences were merely 'to keep wild animals in and not people out,' it was decided that the reserve should have an open access policy to community members, and that the small plots of arable farm land along the river within the reserve would be allowed to continue to be farmed so as not to detract from peoples livelihood strategies (Figure 5) (CCF, 2004: 1). These policies were essential as they recognise the fact that 'people must be made better off, not worse off' as a result of the CBC initiative (CCF, 2004: 1).

Evidence suggests that these trust building strategies have paid off. For example, the community, scared of a disguised land grab by KZN Wildlife who runs the neighbouring Ndumu Game Reserve, wanted to make the fenced corridor linking both reserves as narrow as possible in order to create a buffer zone between the two reserves (CC3, 2004: 2). However, conservation experts argued that a narrow corridor, would not allow enough animals through to restock the Usuthu Gorge

reserve. The community continued to insist that the fenced corridor should be no more than 100 metres wide. It has since been decided by the community, upon realizing over time that their livelihood strategies have not been negatively affected by the reserve's fences, and that they are in control of major decisions concerning the reserve, that the inner corridor fence should be dropped giving more land over to the new reserve and decreasing the conservation buffer zone with the Ndumu Park.

#### **6.6.1. UGCCA: Toward Sustainable Livelihood Strategies**

Barnes (2002: 285) pointed out that areas with high non-use values that contained wildlife, such as UGCCA, could have a complimentary, rather than competitive role to play in development in relation to other land-uses (Figure 4). The previous land use of the UGCCA was mainly farming of traditional livestock and a few plots of arable land along the Usuthu River, which forms the northern boundary of the reserve. In order not to diminish these livelihood strategies of the local Mathenjwa people, several measures were taken by the project implementers to ensure that the reserve compliments and enhances livelihood strategies rather than competes with them.

#### **6.6.2. Providing Resources for Alternative Livelihood Strategies**

One of the existing livelihood strategies was cattle farming and it was decided by the Usuthu steering committee not to allow cattle grazing within the new reserve as a result of potential cross contamination of disease with wild animals. The issue of losing grazing territory to the reserve was of no real concern due to the large areas of spare community land available for this purpose, however, access to water for the cattle was. A windmill was subsequently erected outside the reserve, with the financial support of the Peace Parks Foundation, to provide water for cattle herders cut off from the river by the reserve's new fences (CCF, 2004: 1). This initiative, along with the fact that the arable plots of land along the river were allowed to stay, meant that the pre-existing livelihood strategies of the local people were not diminished. The obvious hope is that these livelihood strategies would be complimented by direct and indirect social benefits accruing from tourist generated income accruing from the existence of the new reserve.

### **6.6.3. Expanding Activities within the CBC Project**

In order to improve the social and economic status of women in the Mathenjwa community the project hopes to exploit the potential arrival of tourists in the Usuthu area. The Wildlands Trust is currently proposing a joint-venture agreement with the Siya Siza Trust based in Johannesburg and Kubulani Crafts to train women in the making of arts and crafts to sell to tourists (CC4, 2004: 3). By focusing on one of the most vulnerable and neglected sectors of the community, namely women, these handicraft initiatives aim to enhance an essential social CBC principle by focusing on the poorest people in the community, as they are the ones with the greatest need (DEAT, 2003: 28). A study of the Vulamehlo Handcraft Project involving the Hambrook community living on the edge of the Spioenkop Nature Reserve in KZN, found that such initiatives provided women with an identity within the community, as well as other non-tangible benefits obtained from regular meetings (socialising, learning handicrafts skills, discussing prices, etc), which were identified as significant social benefits gained by the project members (Kruger and Verster, 2001: 245). Prior to the Vulamehlo Handcraft project, 46% of the women involved had no income, 23% had their pensions only and 31% had an alternative income (Kruger and Verster, 2001: 248). These figures emphasise the importance of such ventures towards enhancing the economic and social status of women within rural communities. In order to increase the economic returns from the handicrafts produced at Vulamehlo, it was suggested that more markets other than the local tourist market of the area needed to be found to sell the products (Kruger and Verster, 2001: 245). In the UGCCA case, possible export markets, similar to the Mabaso Ilala scheme that intends to supply Durban, could be tapped for the crafts produced by the Usuthu community.

According to Kruger and Verster (2001) an unexpected advantage of the Vulamehlo Handcraft Project was the establishment of a line of communication between members of the community, namely women, who are often sidelined and not included by traditional decision making processes and the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation service that runs the Spioenkop Nature Reserve (Kruger and Verster, 2001: 250). Similar beneficial communication lines may be developed at Usuthu, once the handicraft projects for women get underway, in order to enhance the communication



networks that have proven to be a weakness in both the UGCCA and MCGR initiatives so far.

#### **6.6.4. Building skills in the community**

The erection of the fence at Usuthu has probably been the project's biggest success story to date in terms of enhancing community ownership, as well as adding to the livelihood strategies of community members through the creation of jobs. Unlike the Mabaso project, where outside contractors were hired to erect the fences surrounding the reserve, the Usuthu Steering committee took it upon themselves to organise and co-ordinate the fence implementation phase. With the help and advice of a fencing 'fundi' from KZN Wildlife, an initial ten community members from the most affected wards were trained to construct a two-kilometre stretch of fencing. Once this two-kilometer stretch was completed, the first ten community members trained another ten members to continue on with a further two kilometers of fence construction. This process was repeated until the initial ten kilometer phase of fence implementation was completed (CC3, 2004: 1). The only funding condition of this process was that the labour groups chosen had to be gender equitable.

The overall fencing system meant that instead of having one team erect the whole fence, as was the case at Mabaso, there were to be five teams of ten, which meant that the benefits of the employment created were more widely and equitably spread. The benefits could have been spread further if, like the Mavhulani Bush Camp, no husband and wife combinations were employed in order to further ensure the spread of benefits to more than one family (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000: 143). Additionally, the direction of the fence was entirely decided on by the community (CC1, 2004: 2). The successful implementation of the fence did a lot to augment the relationship between the steering committee and the broader community through their realization that they could achieve large tasks on their own (CC4, 2004: 1).

#### **6.7. UGCCA: Toward Economic Sustainability**

Barnes (2002: 285) stated that areas with high non-use values, which usually include regions of scenic and biological diversity, offered wildlife conservation the best



opportunities for maximizing economic returns through nature-based tourism ventures. The UGCCA, due to its remoteness, scenic and biological diversity and fenced corridor link to the Ndumu Game Reserve, which allows the migration of animals between the two conservation zones, satisfies the criteria deemed necessary for the economic viability of conservation areas outlined in Barnes' model (Figure 5).

The tourist concessions that are being considered at Usuthu, in order to increase the financial sustainability of the reserve, are tourism accommodation, hunting in designated areas of the reserve, 4x4 trails on selected roads, game viewing and walking trails (CCF, 2004: 1). As Usuthu is less accessible than Mabaso, it is intended to attract longer-term tourists, as opposed to day visitors. Expressions of interest for the various tourist concessions will be advertised, and interested developers will have to submit a project proposal to the reserve's steering committee for review (CC4, 2004: 3). The steering committee will then select a number of competing expressions of interest that are considered to be the most beneficial in terms of enhancing the community through employment and training opportunities. This is a similar process used by the Damaraland Camp in Namibia (Jones, 2001: 172), where through a careful negotiated bidding process, beneficial contracts were agreed upon, such as managerial training for community members and agreements for the community to take over the running of the initiatives after a given period of time (Jones, 2001: 172). The bids for tourist concessions at the UGCCA will then be submitted to the Tribal Authority, which will then choose the specific tenders they prefer (CC4, 2004: 3). By going through the steering committee the process is designed to be more transparent and hopes to avoid the possibility of corruption such as those tendering offering bribes straight to the tribal authority (CC4, 2004: 3).

The concession for hunting in the UGCCA, despite the controversy surrounding the consumptive use of resources as a sustainable means of enhancing the reserve's chances of survival, will provide a comparative advantage over the neighboring Ndumu Game Reserve that does not allow hunting. The UGCCA steering committee has decided that the sustainable off-take of individual animals in the future is a utilitarian need necessary to achieve the overall economic and biological sustainability of the reserve (CCF, 2004: 2). This also means that the UGCCA can target a slightly different type of clientele, and will not have to compete outright in the

same market niche with the Ndumu Reserve. It is important to note that hunting only makes up a small part of the overall income generating strategy of the UGCCA, and as is planned at Mabaso, will only occur in certain designated areas of the reserve so as not to disturb other tourist activities.

## **6.8. Summary**

It is worth re-emphasising that the UGCCA project has benefited a great deal from the experiences encountered by the Wildlands Trust as a result of its involvement with the Mabaso Community Conservation Reserve. Consequently, the UGCCA project has a specific project manager, providing professional advice on a long-term and constant basis. Additionally, the local community is doing the erection of the reserve's fence with different groups doing different sections so as to spread the benefits of employment throughout the community; as opposed to an outside contractor coming in and hiring one group of local community members, as was the case at Mabaso. The UGCCA project has also benefited from clearly defined property rights with no conflicting debates between communities about who owns the land. This will no doubt prove to be very beneficial when it comes to tendering the various concessions to private investors who are attracted by a stable local political climate. The UGCCA also benefits from its close proximity and linking corridor with the Ndumu Game Reserve in terms of increasing the new reserves animal stocks and marketing needs for this remote area. In terms of competition, the UGCCA will offer concessions that are not available at the Ndumu Game Reserve such as walking, camping and hunting.

As was the case at the MCGR, communication between the UGCCA steering committee and local community has been cited as a problem in terms of speeding up the project's progress. The debate about the incorporation of the tribal authority structure is also an issue with the UGCCA project, with the Inkhosi's appointed steering committee chairman apparently rarely attending meetings. This has had an apparent positive effect, as the hierarchal structure of the steering committee has been diminished, which means that the rest of the steering committee members are more confident about putting their ideas forward. However, in order to determine how open these meetings really are as a result of the chairman's absence, further interviews would need to take place with a broader range of steering committee members.

Interestingly, the UGCCA experience has also illustrated the need to sell the CBC concept, not only to local communities but also to established conservationists that still view the square wheel approach of fortress conservation as the only way of protecting the biodiversity of an area.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

#### **7.1. Summary**

This thesis began with an overview of the theory behind community-based conservation initiatives. The basic premise being that local people will stop exploiting resources within reserves or communal areas if they achieve increasing incomes or are otherwise economically compensated for opportunity costs in return for the limited resource use of certain areas. The CBC concept further advocates that through the sustainable use of resources, often involving nature-based tourism initiatives, communities can be enhanced and empowered both economically and socially, making CBC initiatives potential development tools for poor communities living in communal areas.

An objective of this study was to identify and confirm necessary criteria for the successful implementation of CBC initiatives. This study found that all of DEAT's principles and criteria (see table 1) and Ostrom's principles for sustaining common property institutions (see table 2) had been taken into consideration at both the MCGR and UGCCA projects. For example, ensuring a variety of different ways for communities to earn a living and to minimise disruption by CBC projects of pre-existing livelihood strategies carried out by local residents; guaranteeing that the natural resource base of an area is maintained and even improved for future generations; making sure local organisations, including local government and community organisations work effectively together to manage local resources for the benefit of local people and the environment; ensuring that communities receive real benefits – economic, social, cultural and spiritual – from managing natural resources wisely; implementing effective policies and laws, where ever possible, by legitimate and representative local organisations; providing outside assistance to facilitate local projects and to ensure the development of the necessary skills for local communities to eventually take on the initiatives themselves; as well as a good understanding of local leadership and the gaining of support by local leadership for CBC projects have all been, to some extent, put into practice or tested at the MCGR and UGCCA project sites; evidence of which shall be summarised in this chapter. Clearly defined property rights, as well as conflict resolution mechanisms are further essential criteria that have played important

roles in shaping the implementation processes at both the project areas, especially the MCGR.

The most important of the criteria identified within this study was the need to gain the broad based support of local communities affected by CBC initiatives. Critics of the CBC concept argue that the concept is based on tenuous assumptions about human behaviour, often assuming that rural communities are homogenous in nature in terms of the benefits they derive from their surrounding environment (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999: 229). This means that in reality conservation efforts are likely to impact positively on certain individuals and negatively on others within communities. Little consideration is given to individuals within communities and the motives they might have to work against community-based conservation programs. Furthermore, while community-based conservation can function in heterogeneous communities, an understanding of community is necessary in order to determine appropriate and realistic incentives for conservation. It is for this reason that both the MCGR and UGCCA projects followed a long-term ten-year implementation plan (Figure 6) with a significant amount of time being designated towards gaining the perceptions, ideas and demands from the respective local communities, as well as understanding and learning their livelihood strategies (CCF, 2004: 2).

Each community, as well as being heterogeneous in nature, is different from the next community in terms of their outlook and problems they face. This means that each community requires a specific strategy when it comes to successfully implementing a CBC initiative. Various differences between the Mabaso and the Mathenjwa communities emphasise this. For example, the Mabaso community was experiencing a conflict with the neighbouring Mbila community over land rights, which was cited as one potential reason for the vandalism of the reserve fences. A strategy to overcome this conflict proposed that the Mbila community become shareholders in the lodge development plans, thus giving them an economic incentive to help the new reserve succeed (CC1, 2004: 3). A further example of differences between communities is that the Inkhosi of the Mathenjwa people took a less active role in the decision making process of the UGCCA initiative than was the case at MCGR. Due to a lack of further research, it was hard to determine whether this would have a positive or negative impact on the decision making process. It can be argued that as the Inkhosi is the leader and head representative of the community, it is vital that he is involved in the process in order to add extra impetus to the proceedings. A counter

perspective given, was that the Inkhosi's absence meant that more open, productive and democratic meetings were held (CC4, 2004:3).

The second most important criteria identified by this study was the need to have a broad based involvement of the community in the implementation process in order to ensure that the community feels a part of, and is in charge of, the process. At both the MCGR and UGCCA, community members were involved with the decision making process through their ward representatives on the respective steering committees. Middle of the month meetings had been proposed at the MCGR, where only the community representatives of the steering committee meet with out the technical expertise of the Wildlands Trust in order to gain more independence in the decision making process (CCF, 2004: 2). The community must also be involved in the building of necessary infrastructure for the reserves so that they gain a sense of achievement, as well as a wage for their labour. The erection of the game fence at the UGCCA is a good example of this, whereby different groups of community members constructed different segments of the fence, consequently spreading the benefits of employment through out the community and created the realisation that big tasks could be achieved by the local community (CC4, 2004: 3). Interestingly, this type of involvement was not as apparent at the MCGR, which could be a further explanatory reason for the slower rate of progress and continued vandalism of the MCGR fences. More research would have to be done, however, to ascertain all the multi-faceted reasons for this vandalism and slow progress. The quicker progress and successful involvement of the community at the UGCCA is partly attributable to the fact that the Wildlands Trust has gained invaluable experience from the MCGR project and has assigned a specific technical advisor to the UGCCA project to ensure the process is kept on track.

Further examples of both the MCGR and UGCCA incorporating DEAT's and Ostrom's identified criteria include the fact that the rules and regulations of both reserves have been decided on by the respective steering committees, which are made up of local community ward representatives, tribal authority members, KZN Wildlife officers and Wildlands Trust project managers. These rules and regulations are on the whole accepted by the local communities and have actually been implemented at Mabaso with the aid of the local police who recognise them as legitimate (CCF, 2004: 3). The inclusion of tribal structures in both the MCGR and UGCCA steering committees further increases the trust and feeling



of ownership by the respective communities and brings on board their local leadership to ensure their support for the projects. There is a danger that the Inkhosis that officially oversee tribal affairs may be too dictatorial and undemocratic in the decision making process. There is no apparent evidence of this happening at either the MCGR or UGCCA; however, more research would need to occur over a longer period of time to confirm this.

Despite further attempts by both projects to gain the support of the community and incorporate necessary criteria into the implementation phases, the initiatives have encountered several major challenges to date. Firstly, the analysis of both the MCGR and UGCCA projects emphasise the length of time it takes to get a CBC project up and running. This was mainly due to initial community reservations about the project; an almost non-existent infrastructure base to begin with; a lack of managerial and organisational skill amongst the local communities and government bureaucracy in the planning process. Time-consuming factors such as these surmount to a need for a long-term and realistic implementation time frame in order for CBC projects to start generating positive results. This means that the donor community needs to support CBC initiatives for the long-term. Secondly, the MCGR re-emphasised the need for clearly defined property rights as disputes over tribal boundaries set the project back in terms of time and money. Thirdly, good communication links between the project management of both initiatives and the local community was cited as being crucial to getting the broader community on side and speeding up the whole process. Bad communication structures led to a lot of uncertainty within the local communities. This led to a lot of mistrust with local communities seeing the CBC initiative as a disguised form of land grab by conservationists. Fourthly, an over-reliance on the private sector to deliver on their promises to attract visitors and fill beds was experienced at the MCGR. Due to the difficulties faced by rural communities in terms of gaining access to formal credit facilities, lack of managerial skills and limitations in donor funding, many CBC projects are reliant on joint ventures between local communities and private investors to run various tourist concessions in communal areas. An important criterion in order to avoid exploitation and to maximise any benefits accruing from private investors utilising local community resources is the development of favourable legal contracts as exemplified by Namibia's Damaraland Community Camp (Jones, 2001: 172). Both the MCGR and UGCCA communities need to agree with their respective private investors on a favourable contractual agreement confirming the terms and conditions necessary to put the investors under a bit of pressure to

perform, whilst offering enough incentives for private investors to want to invest in the area.

A further objective of this study was to see how different identified criteria necessary for successful CBC projects affected the social, economic and biological elements of the sustainable development model. The economic element relates to increasing people's well being through job creation and income generating schemes. Socio-cultural factors include empowering communities to take control of their own destiny in terms of realising the benefits that can accrue from their own resources in a sustainable manner. This element can also be enhanced by enabling local communities to take charge of CBC initiatives through their own elective and decision making processes so as to increase their self determination and decrease their reliance on the government and NGOs. The biological element refers to the sustainable conservation and enhancement of resources and biodiversity of an area. The new conservation paradigm advocates that the enhancement of the economic and socio-cultural elements, by creating income generating conservation initiatives, will lead to the achievement of the biological goals. This research has demonstrated that some of the key factors in determining success of CBCs include land rights, tenure security, governance, and democracy and gender equality. These factors are inextricably linked to community and can therefore be associated with the social element of the sustainable development model. However, a more complex model of sustainable development that has a fourth dimension – the institutional dimension – has been used for analysis of livelihoods (Satge, 2002: 5). Given institutional factors, although related to the social element, are so prevalent in determining the success of the CBC initiative the more complex model may be more suitable for analysis of CBCs.

Determining people's livelihood strategies and ensuring that these are not diminished, but in fact enhanced, is crucial in terms of gaining community support of CBC initiatives. At the MCGR, for example, the harvesting of *Ilala* plants has been allowed to continue within the reserve. At the UGCCA, farming plots along the river remain intact and a windmill has been erected outside the reserve to ensure drinking water for cattle cut off from the river. Both projects have open access policies whereby, despite the fences, the local community are allowed into the reserve at all times. The fences are to keep animals in and not people out (CC1, 2004: 2). These different livelihood strategies re-emphasise the need to learn and understand local communities and adopt specific project strategies accordingly.

Plans to enhance the economic situation and diversify the local communities' livelihood strategies, at both the MCGR and the UGCCA, are to be introduced in addition to the already intended benefits hoped to accrue from tourist concessions. At the MCGR, these plans include supplying Ilala leaves directly to Durban, thus cutting out the middle salesman and ensuring that more money goes to the community that collect the leaves from the reserve. This is a gender-oriented approach as the majority of Ilala pickers are women. At the UGCCA, there are also plans to train women in the making of arts and crafts for sale to tourists. All these incentives are designed to reduce the opportunity costs incurred by communities of setting up the reserves and to enhance and improve the livelihoods of those living in the vicinity of the new project areas as well as to increase the gender equity of the communities by ensuring women benefit from the projects.

## **7.2. Future Predictions.**

Both the MCGR and UGCCA projects have the potential to succeed. The MCGR is very easily accessible by road and is located close to Sodwana Bay, South Africa's premiere diving destination, which means that the new reserve could potentially tap into a large pre-existing tourist market by offering an alternative day trip for divers. The MCGR has a large non-use value potential as a result of its location on the shores of Lake Sibaya, South Africa's largest freshwater lake, which has seen very little development along its shores. Due to the hilly topography and sandy soils, the area does not lend itself to arable farming. Subsequently, the Lake Sibaya shoreline represents an unspoilt wilderness area, something of a scarce commodity in South Africa. The lake offers the opportunity for the community to sell various concessions to tour companies, or indeed to run their own initiatives, in the form of boat cruises, kayaking and fishing with permits. The Greater St. Lucia Wetlands Park, in which the MCGR is situated, has been promised large investments in tourist ventures and infrastructure by DEAT and private investors, further increasing the profile and marketing potential of the area.

The UGCCA also has a lot of potential for success. Firstly, the UGCCA location is remoter than the MCGR and is presently only accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles. This offers visitors to the area a true wilderness experience that satisfies Barnes's (2002) pre-requisites of low disturbance, high biodiversity and remote locations for the success of community

conservation projects. Secondly, the UGCCA is situated next to, and shares a corridor link, with the Ndumu Game Reserve that allows the free movement of wildlife between the two conservation areas. Thirdly, the UGCCA intends to offer concessions, like hunting, that are not in direct competition with the Ndumu Reserve. Fourthly, the Mathenjwa community involved with the UGCCA initiative have secure property rights to the area as a result of a recent land restitution claim. Fifthly, evidence so far suggests that the community is in full support of the initiative, which is emphasised by their desire to remove the inner fence of the corridor link in order to increase the conservation buffer zone. Finally, the UGCCA project has benefited a great deal from the Wildlands Trust's previous experiences at the MCGR. This is exemplified by the fact that the UGCCA project has been assigned a full time specific project manager by the Wildlands Trust and that some of the jobs created by the CBC initiative, like putting up the fencing, were distributed more widely and equitably through out the entire community.

After completing the fieldwork for this research project both CBC initiatives have received inputs that have propelled them to 'another level'. According to Andrew Venter from the Wildlands Trust, the MCGR was signing an agreement with a funding partner and the UGCCA application for poverty relief funds was successful. Such economic inputs are likely to contribute to the success and sustainability of the two initiatives.

### **7.3. Further Research and Limitations of Study**

Hulme and Murphree (2001) identified two major gaps in knowledge with regards to community based conservation initiatives. Firstly, research is required to determine whether these community oriented approaches to conservation are improving the livelihoods of rural Africans who have borne the costs of 'fortress conservation' for decades and who are often among the poorest people in the world. Secondly, it has been further recognised that additional research is also required to ascertain whether these approaches are raising the likelihood of the conservation of African wildlife (Hulme and Murphree, 2001: 2).

This study focused mainly on the implementation of CBC initiatives and the necessary criteria needed to make these projects sustainable in the long run. It can be argued,

however, that the real challenge for the sustainability of CBC projects will come after the implementation phases. For this reason, further research would be required once the projects are properly up and running to monitor what the actual real benefits, if any, are to the community. How are these benefits distributed amongst the community? Who decides how they are distributed? Is the process democratic? What contractual agreements between the community and the private investors were eventually decided on? Will there still be a need for donor support and outside technical advice?

Moves to give communities more ownership over resources raised questions of how far power should be devolved. Should local district councils that tend to be more democratic in nature in comparison to traditional authorities be responsible for receiving and distributing benefits generated by CBC initiatives; or should these responsibilities be left to traditional structures, such as tribal authorities that tend to be undemocratic and male oriented in nature. The former method was used in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE initiative and was found to create additional layers of bureaucracy and corruption (Jones and Murphree, 2001: 45), whilst the latter method was used in Zambia's ADMADE programme, which experienced nepotism when it came to local chiefs distributing the benefits of the project (Gibson and Marking, 1995: 646). As the MCGR and UGCCA both use traditional structures, it is hard to determine from this study what method, between traditional authority and local government structures, is the most progressive for CBC initiatives, and whether an alternative method altogether is available. A more comparative research study of CBC projects that use different institutional structures would need to be carried out to determine the different impacts of either traditional authority or local government institutional structures.

There is also a danger that any benefits created by CBC initiatives may create in-migration into that area putting additional pressure on resources. Several CAMPFIRE wards in Zimbabwe experienced this phenomenon to the extent that local people actively encouraged in-migration in order to gain more government recognition for development investment. Conservation was therefore seen as a short-term solution to encouraging the long-term development that would eventually be biologically unsustainable. Inevitably, if this pattern is repeated in other CBC areas, then a hybridisation of fortress conservation and the new conservation paradigm will have to occur in order to maintain the biological element of the sustainable development model. Further research would have to occur at



both the MCGR and UGCCA project sites once economic benefits start accruing to see whether an in-migration pattern occurs.

Due to a lack of time and access, a general weakness of this study is the absence of donor perspectives on funding CBC initiatives. For example, why are donors interested in CBC projects? Do they appreciate the long-term time frames necessary for CBC initiatives? What institutional procedures would they like to see implemented and why?

#### **7.4. Conclusion.**

It is clear from the findings in this research that community-based conservation initiatives aimed at achieving both conservation and development goals face a number of challenges that could, if not taken into consideration, undermine the long-term sustainability of such projects. CBC projects require specific locations and the right criteria to be in place for their successful implementation. Not all communities or communal areas meet these criteria, which is why CBC should be seen more as an important and necessary supplement to conservation strategies as opposed to a holistic conservation policy tool. This research demonstrates that implementing CBC is difficult but that obstacles can be overcome and avoided especially through learning from previous experiences; however, there is still a need for the right inputs and criteria for sustainability to be in place, which means that some fortress conservation may be necessary to protect large tracts of land in the foreseeable future. However, based on findings from this project this author argues that CBC initiatives can make an important contribution to the conservation and development of certain areas at grass-root levels. For this reason, CBC initiatives should be encouraged and enhanced in areas where institutional factors can be moulded to achieve biological, economic and social goals of sustainable development, with one of the critical aims being to improve the livelihood strategies of poor people.



### Reference list.

- Adams, W. (2001). Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the Third World, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London: Routledge.
- Adams, W. and Hulme, D. (2001). "Conservation and Community: Changing Narratives, Policies and Practices in African Conservation," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Limited. 24-38.
- Anstey, S and De Sousa, C. (2001). "Old Ways and New Challenges: Traditional Resource Management Systems in the Chimanimani Mountains, Mozambique," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Limited. 195- 207.
- Barnes, J. (2002). "The Economic Returns to Wildlife Management in Southern Africa," in Pearce, D. Pearce, C. and Palmer, C (ed.) Valuing the Environment in Developing Countries, London: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc. 274- 289.
- Barrow, E and Murphree, M. (2001). "Community Conservation: From Concept to Practice," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Limited. 24- 38.
- Bishop, C. (2003) "Community Reserve Gets First Stock of Game," African Eye News Service, [Online:  
<http://www.lowveldinfo.com/news/showstory.asp?story=4964>]. Accessed 26/11/2003.
- Blaikie, N. (2000). Designing Social Research, Blackwell Publishers Press.
- Campbell, L and Vianio-Mattila, A. (2003). "Participatory Development and Community-Based Conservation: Opportunities Missed for Lessons Learned?" Human Ecology, Vol 31, No.3, 417-437.
- Cousins, B. (2002). "Reforming Communal Land Tenure in South Africa- Why Land Titling is not the Answer: Critical Comments on the Land Rights Bill, 2002," School of Government, University of the Western Cape [Online:  
[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/livelihoods/landrights/downloads/saclrb.rtf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/livelihoods/landrights/downloads/saclrb.rtf).] Accessed 05/02/2004.
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). (2003) "Guidelines for the Implementation of Community- based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in South Africa," [Online:  
<http://www.environment.gov.za/Documents/Documents/2003Sep12/cbnrm-12092003.html>]. Accessed 14/11/2003.

- Dzingarai, V. (2003). "CAMPFIRE is not for Ndebele Migrants': the Impact of Excluding Outsiders from CAMPFIRE in the Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe," Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 29, No.2.
- Elliot, W. (1996). "Wilderness in the New South Africa," International Journal of Wilderness, Vol 1, No2.
- Emerton, L. (2001). "The Nature of Benefits and the Benefits of nature: Why Wildlife Conservation has not Economically Benefited Communities in Africa," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Limited. 208- 227.
- Engelbrecht, W and Van der Walt, (1993). "Notes on the Economic Use of Kruger National Park," Koedoe, 35 (2).
- Felton, I. (2000). Recommendations For the Re-introduction of Game into the Mabaso Game Reserve, Working Paper for Mabaso Tribal Authority.
- Fennell, D. (2003). "Ecotourism in the South African Context," Africa Insight, 2003, Vol 33, No. 2, Pp3-8.
- Foggin, T and Munster, D. (2000). "Enhancing Linkages Between Rural Communities and Protected Areas in KwaZulu-Natal Through Tourism- Abantu Baysizana (People Helping People)," The Journal of Tourism Studies, Vol 11, No1, Pp 24-36
- Fox, J. (2003). "The Wildest African Dream: How Transfrontier Parks are Changing the Map of Africa," Getaway, September 2003, Vol 15, No6
- Flick, U. (1998). An Introduction to Qualitative Research, Thousand oaks: Sage Publications.
- Gibson, C and Marking, A. (1995). "Transforming Rural Hunters into Conservationists: An Assessment of Community- Based Wildlife Management programs in Africa," World Development, Vol.23, No.6, Pp118-140
- Gibson, C. and Agrawal, A. (1999). "Enchantment and Disenchantment: The Role of Community in Natural Resource Conservation," World Development, Vol. 27, No. 4
- Goldman, M. (2003) "Partitioned Nature, Privileged Knowledge: Community-Based Conservation in Tanzania," Development and Change, Vol. 34, No. 5
- Govender, R. (2002). "Zulu King's Subjects Take him to Court," Sunday Times, [Online: <http://www.suntimes.co.za/2002/03/31/news/news12.asp>] Accessed on 05/02/2004
- Grainger, A. (1997). "Assessing the Environmental Impacts of National Development," in Kirkpatrick, C and Lee, N (ed.) Sustainable Development in a

Developing World: Integrating Socio- Economic Appraisal and Environmental Assessment, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. Pp 61- 83.

Green, M and Sibisi, N. (2001). "Eco-tourism: A Rural Case Study" Indicator South Africa, Vol 18, No1

Hulme, D. and Murphree, M. (1999). "Policy Arena: Communities, Wildlife and the 'New Conservation' in Africa," Journal of International Development, Vol 11, No. 2.

Hulme, D and Murphree, M. (2001). "Community Conservation as Policy: Promise and Performance" in Hulme, D and Murphree, M. (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Limited. Pp1- 9.

Hulme, D and Infield, M. (2001). "Community Conservation, Reciprocity and Park – People Relationships: Lake Mburo National Park, Uganda," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M. (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Limited. Pp106-130.

Infield, M. and Adams, W. (1999). "Policy Arena: Institutional Sustainability and Community Conservation: A Case Study from Uganda," Journal of International Development, Vol. 11, No.2.

Isikhungusethu Environmental Services (IES). (2000). Usuthu Gorge Community Park Project North East Zululand, Working Paper for the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority.

Jones, B. (2001). "The Evolution of a Community-based Approach to Wildlife Management at Kunene, Namibia," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M. M (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Ltd. Pp160-175.

Jones, B and Murphree, M. (2001). "The Evolution of Policy on Community Conservation in Namibia and Zimbabwe," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation, Oxford: James Curry Ltd. Pp 38- 59.

Kangwana, K. (2001). "Can Community Conservation Strategies Meet the Conservation Agenda," in Hulme, D and Murphree, M. (ed.) African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation. Oxford: James Curry Limited. Pp 256- 267.

Kruger, S. and Verster, R. (2001). "An Appraisal of the Vulamehlo Handicraft Project," Development Southern Africa, Vol 18 No2.

Kvale, Steiner. (1994). Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing, London: Sage Publications

- Leach, M. Mearns, R. and Scoones, I. (1999). "Environmental Entitlements: Dynamics and Institutions in Community- Based Natural resource Management," World Development, Vol 27, No2, 12-28.
- Lewellen, T.C. (1995). Dependency and Development: An Introduction to the Third World, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.
- Lindsay, W. (1987). "Integrating Parks and Pastoralists: Some Lessons from Amboseli," in Anderson, D. and Grove, R. (eds) Conservation in Africa: People Policies and Practice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Macleod, F. (2003). "People's Conservation on Target," Mail and Guardian, 10 October 2003.
- Mawhinney, M. (2002). Sustainable Development: Understanding the Green Debates, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Mearns, K. (2003). "Community-based tourism: The Key to Empowering the Sankuyo Community in Botswana," Africa Insight, Vol 33, No2, 29-32.
- MoneywebKZN. (2003). "Land Squabble Settled," [Online: <http://ml.mny.co.za/mztl.nsf/0/C2256807OpenDocument>] Accessed 27/11/2003.
- Mullen, J.(1999). Rural Poverty, Empowerment And Sustainable Livelihoods, London: Ashgate publishing Ltd.
- Murombedzi, J. (1999). "Policy Arena: Devolution and Stewardship in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE Programme" Journal of International Development, Vol. 11, No. 2.
- Murphree, M. (1994). "The Role of Institutions in Community-Based Conservation," in Western, D. White, R. and Strum, C. (eds) Natural Connections: Perspectives in Community-Based Conservation, Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Ntsebeza, L. (2003). "Democracy in South Africa's Countryside: Is There A Role for Traditional Authorities," Development Update: Rural Development in South Africa, Vol. 4 No.1.
- Nuding, M. (1999). The Potential of Wildlife Management for Development Cooperation, Eschborn: German Technical Cooperation Press.
- Peace Parks Foundation. (2002). The Facilitation and Development of Trans-frontier Conservation Areas in Southern Africa: Funding Application in Support of the Lubombo Trans -frontier Conservation Area, Working Paper in partnership with The Wildlands Trust.
- Peace Parks Foundation. (2002). "Background Information on the Wildlands Trust," [Online: [http://www.africa.de/docs/lubombo\\_tfca\\_funding\\_application\\_annex\\_b\\_25\\_6\\_2\\_002](http://www.africa.de/docs/lubombo_tfca_funding_application_annex_b_25_6_2_002)] Accessed 05/02/2003.



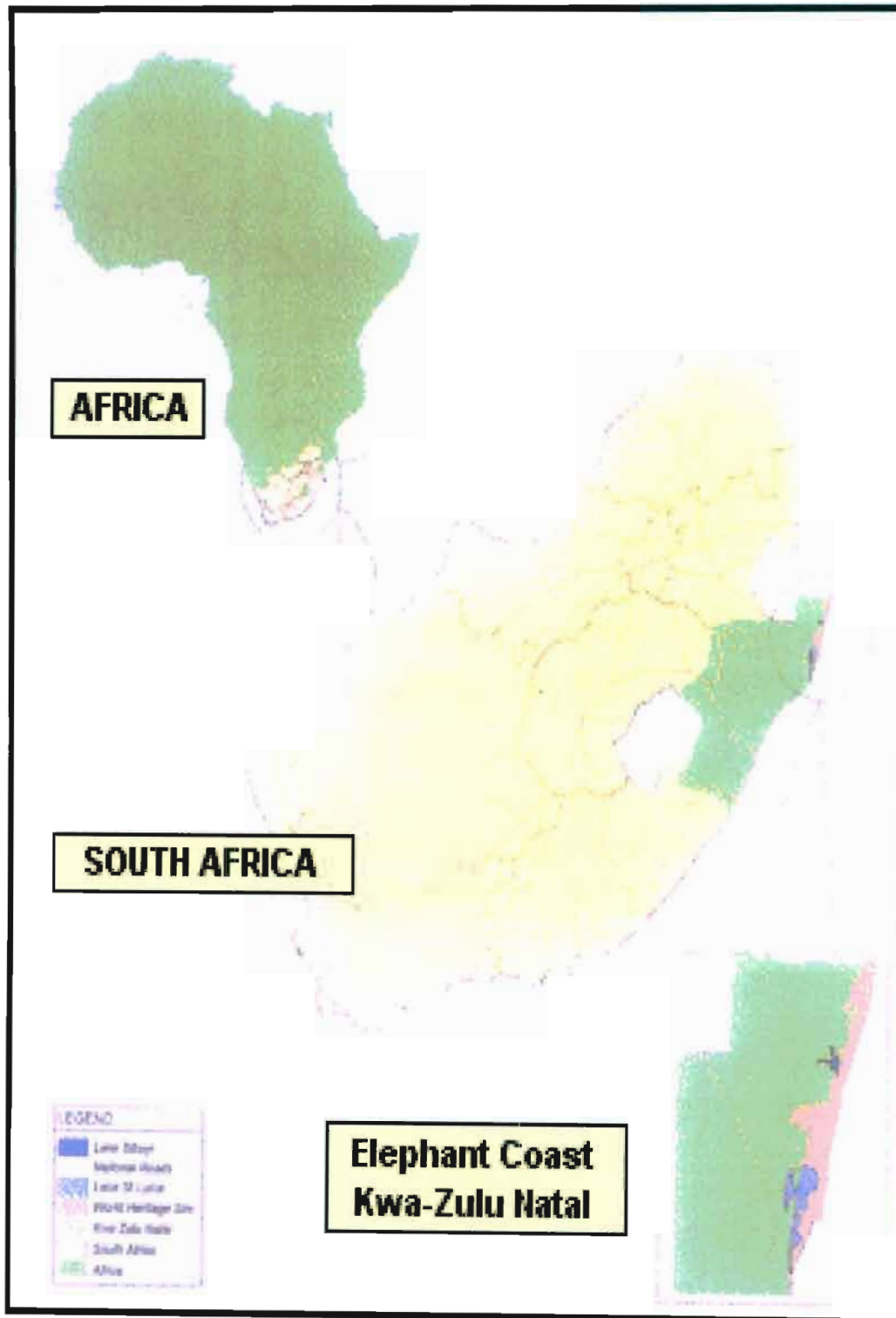
- Poultney, C and Spenceley, A. (2001). "Practical Strategies for Pro-Poor Tourism, Wilderness Safaris South Africa: Rocktail Bay and Nduma lodge," PPT Working Paper #1 [online: [http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/safrica\\_cs1pdf](http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/safrica_cs1pdf)] Accessed 28/ 01/ 2004.
- Preston, P.W. (1996). Development Theory: An Introduction, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Rigby, S. and Diab, R. (2003). "Environmental Sustainability and the Development Facilitation Act in South Africa," Journal of Environmental Law, Vol 15, Issue 1.
- Robson, C. 1993. Real World Research, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- SABCNEWS. (2003). "Natal Game Reserve Dispute Settled," [Online: [http://www.sabcnews.com/south\\_africa/general/0,2172,67062,00.html](http://www.sabcnews.com/south_africa/general/0,2172,67062,00.html)] Accessed 27/11/2003.
- Satge, R. (2002) Learning About Livelihoods: Insights from Southern Africa, Periperi Publishing and Oxford Publishing.
- Shilling, J and Osha, J. (2002). Paying for Environmental Stewardship, Technical Paper submitted to WWF: Macroeconomic Programme Office, Washington.
- The World Conservation Union. (2003). "What is the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress? The World Conservation Union," [Online: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/english/about/intro.htm>]. Accessed 15/12/2003.
- The World Conservation Union. (2003). "Breaking New Ground: New Approaches to People – Centred Natural Resource Management for Development in Southern Africa," [Online: <http://www.cbrnm.uwc.ac.za/about.htm>]. Accessed: 07/11/2003.
- Thomas, N. and Brooks, S. (2003). "Ecotourism for Community Development: Environmental Partnerships and the Il Ngwesi Ecotourism Project, Northern Kenya," Africa Insight, Vol 33, No1/2, Pp 9-18
- TourismKZN. (2004). "Obtaining a Permission to Occupy Certificate: Community Approval," [Online: <http://www.kzn.org.za/kzn/investors/70.html>] Accessed 05/02/2004.
- Venter, A. K. (2000). Community-based Natural Resource Management in South Africa: Experience from the Greater St Lucia Wetlands Area, [Online: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/susg/docs/docs/pas2/venter.PDF>] Accessed 05/02/2004.
- Viljoen, J. and Naicker, K. (2000). "Nature-Based Tourism on Communal Land: the Mavhulani Experience," Development Southern Africa, Vol 17, No. 1.

- Wells, M. (1996). "The Role of Economics in Critical African Wildlife Policy Debates," African Wildlife policy Consultation, Overseas Development Administration, London.
- Western, D. (1989). 'Conservation Without Parks: Wildlife in the Rural Landscapes,' in Western, D and Pearl, M. (eds) Conservation for the twenty- first Century, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Wilshusen, P. Brechin, S. Fortwangler, C. and West, P (2002). "Reinventing a Square Wheel: Critique of a Resurgent "Protection Paradigm" in International Biodiversity Conservation," Society and Natural Resources, Vol 15, 17- 40.
- Wilson, E. (1989). "Threats to Biodiversity," Scientific American, Washington Press.
- World Bank, (2004) "National Government and Local Economic Development Initiatives in South Africa," [Online: <http://www.worldbank.org/urban/led/natsaled.html>], Accessed 07/02/2004.
- World Commission on the Environment and Development. (WCED). (1987). Our Common Future, Oxford: Oxford University Press.



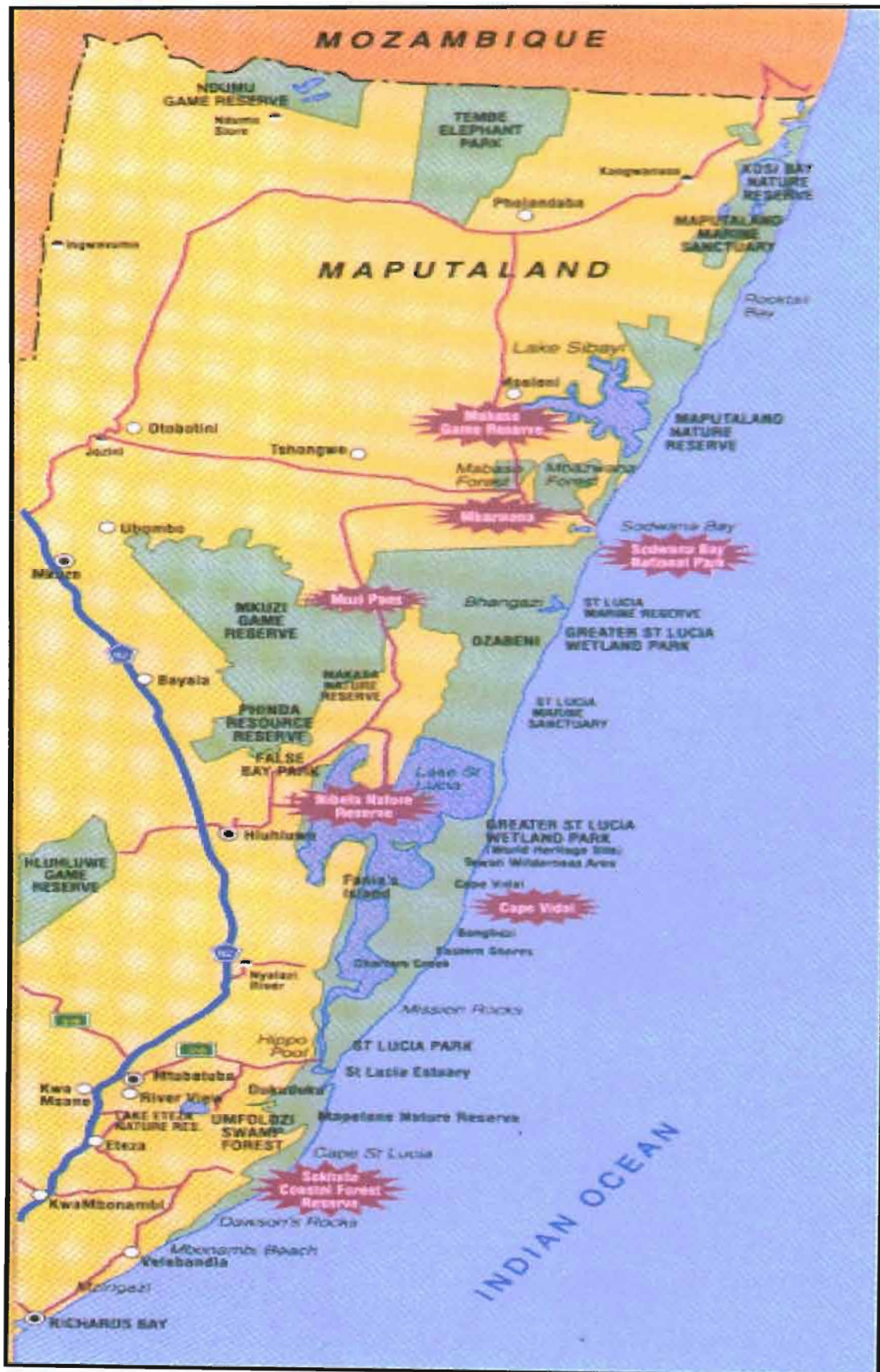
## Appendix A

**Figure 8. Site map of Maputoland.**



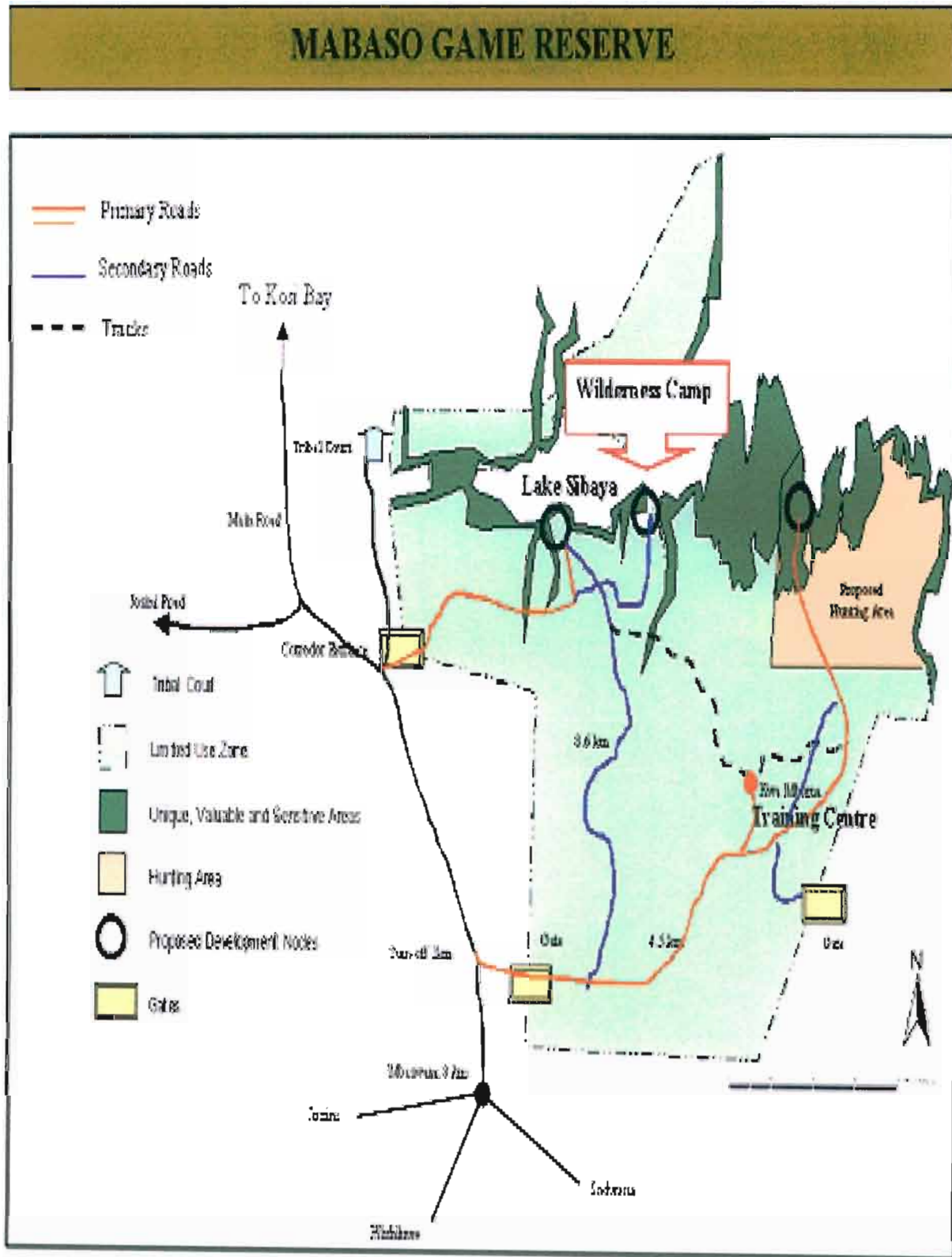
## Appendix A

Figure 9. Map Study Area.



## Appendix A

**Figure 10. Site map of Mabaso Community Game Reserve.**





## Appendix B



Plate 1. The Mabaso Tribal Court House



Plate 2. Ilala Leaf (*Hyphanae Coriaces*) Products



Plate 3. The Mabaso Community Game Reserve Warehouse.